

76/179

C

v. 2



*The Bancroft Library*

University of California • Berkeley

































This manuscript is open for research purposes. All literary rights in the manuscript, including the right to publish, are reserved to the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley. No part of the manuscript may be quoted for publication without the written permission of the Director of The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

Requests for permission to quote for publication should be addressed to the Regional Oral History Office, 486 Library, and should include identification of the specific passages to be quoted, anticipated use of the passages, and identification of the user.





JAPANESE-AMERICAN RELOCATION REVIEWED

Volume I: Decision and Exodus

James Rowe	The Japanese Evacuation Decision
Percy C. Heckendorf	Planning for the Japanese Evacuation: Reforming Regulatory Agency Procedures
Tom Clark	Comments on the Japanese-American Relocation
Edward Ennis	A Justice Department Attorney Comments on the Japanese-American Relocation
Herbert Wenig	The California Attorney General's Office, the Judge Advocate General Corps, and Japanese-American Relocation

Volume II: The Internment

Robert Cozzens	Assistant National Director of the War Relocation Authority
Dillon S. Myer	War Relocation Authority: The Director's Account
Ruth Kingman	The Fair Play Committee and Citizen Participation

With An Introduction by  
Mike M. Masaoka

Interviews Conducted by  
Rosemary Levenson  
Amelia Fry  
Miriam Feingold Stein





JAPANESE-AMERICAN RELOCATION REVIEWED

Volume II  
The Internment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	i
INTRODUCTION by Mike M. Masaoka	vi
INTERVIEWERS' INTRODUCTION	xiii
HISAKO HIBI: Curriculum vitae, Paintings of Tanforan Assembly Center and Topaz Relocation Center	
I. ROBERT B. COZZENS: <u>Assistant National Director of the War Relocation Authority</u>	
Establishment of the War Relocation Authority	
Administration of the Centers	
Pressures From All Sides	
Resettlement and Return	
WRA and Public Relations with T.E. "Pat" Frayne, Public Relations Officer, War Relocation Authority	
Appendices	
II. DILLON S. MYER: <u>War Relocation Authority: The Director's Account</u>	
The Evacuation	
The Relocation Centers	
Resettlement	
III. RUTH KINGMAN: <u>The Fair Play Committee and Citizen Participation</u>	
Early Years	
World War II and the Japanese Evacuation	
The Fair Play Committee	
The War Relocation Authority and the Community	
Changing Tide of Public Opinion	
The Return	
Conclusions	
Appendices	
IV. APPENDIX: Lila Andrews Wilson, <u>Recollections of Minidoka Relocation Center</u> , an interview by Joe Wilson	





## PREFACE

The Earl Warren Oral History Project, a five-year project of the Regional Oral History Office, was inaugurated in 1969 to produce tape-recorded interviews with persons prominent in the arenas of politics, governmental administration, and criminal justice during the Warren Era in California. Focusing on the years 1925-1953, the interviews were designed not only to document the life of Chief Justice Warren but to gain new information on the social and political changes of a state in the throes of a depression, then a war, then a postwar boom.

An effort was made to document the most significant events and trends by interviews with key participants who spoke from diverse vantage points. Most were queried on the one or two topics in which they were primarily involved; a few interviewees with special continuity and breadth of experience were asked to discuss a multiplicity of subjects. While the cut-off date of the period studied was October, 1953--Earl Warren's departure for the United States Supreme Court--there was no attempt to end an interview perfunctorily when the narrator's account had to go beyond that date in order to complete the topic.

The interviews have stimulated the deposit of Warreniana in the form of papers from friends, aides, and the opposition; government documents; old movie newsreels; video tapes; and photographs. This Earl Warren collection is being added to The Bancroft Library's extensive holdings on twentieth century California politics and history.

The project has been financed by four outright grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by gifts from local donors which were matched by the Endowment. Contributors include the former law clerks of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Cortez Society, many long-time supporters of "the Chief," and friends and colleagues of some of the major memoirists in the project. The Roscoe and Margaret Oakes Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation have jointly sponsored the Northern California Negro Political History Series, a unit of the Earl Warren Project.

Particular thanks are due the Friends of The Bancroft Library, who were instrumental in raising local funds for matching, who served as custodian for all such funds, and who then supplemented from their own treasury all local contributions on a one-dollar-for-every-three dollars basis.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

Amelia R. Fry, Director  
Earl Warren Oral History Project

Willa K. Baum, Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

1 March 1973  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley





## EARL WARREN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Principal Investigators

Ira M. Heyman  
Lawrence A. Harper  
Arthur H. Sherry

Advisory Council

Barbara Nachtrieb Armstrong  
Walton E. Bean  
Richard M. Buxbaum  
William R. Dennes  
Joseph P. Harris  
James D. Hart  
John D. Hicks\*  
William J. Hill  
Robert Kenny  
Adrian A. Kragen  
Thomas Kuchel  
Eugene C. Lee  
Mary Ellen Leary

James R. Leiby  
Helen McGregor  
Dean E. McHenry  
Sheldon H. Messinger  
Frank C. Newman  
Allan Nevins\*  
Warren Olney, III  
Bruce Poyer  
Sho Sato  
Mortimer Schwartz  
Merrell F. Small  
John D. Weaver

Project Interviewers

Miriam Feingold  
Amelia R. Fry  
Joyce A. Henderson  
Rosemary Levenson  
Gabrielle Morris

Special Interviewers

Orville Armstrong  
Willa K. Baum  
Malca Chall  
June Hogan  
Frank Jones  
Alice G. King  
Elizabeth Kirby  
Harriet Nathan  
Suzanne Riess  
Ruth Teiser

\*Deceased during the term of the project.





EARL WARREN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

(California, 1926-1953)

Interviews Completed by June, 1974

Single Interview Volumes

- A. Wayne Amerson, Northern California and Its Challenge to a Negro in the Mid-1900's. 1974 With an introduction by Henry Ziesenhenn
- C. L. Dellums, International President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Civil Rights Leader. 1973  
With an introduction by Tarea Pittman
- McIntyre Faries, California Republicans, 1934-1953. 1974
- Richard Graves, Theoretician, Advocate, and Candidate in California State Government. 1973
- Emily H. Huntington, A Career in Consumer Economics and Social Insurance. 1971.  
With an introduction by Charles A. Gulick, Professor of Economics, Emeritus.
- Helen S. MacGregor, A Career in Public Service with Earl Warren. 1973  
With an introduction by Earl Warren
- Richard Allen McGee, Participant in the Evolution of American Corrections: 1931-1973. 1974
- Donald McLaughlin, Careers in Mining Geology and Management, University Governance and Teaching. 1974
- Tarea Pittman, NAACP Official and Civil Rights Worker. 1974  
With an introduction by C.L. Dellums
- Robert B. Powers, Law Enforcement, Race Relations: 1930-60. 1971
- William Byron Rumford, Legislator for Fair Employment, Fair Housing, and Public Health. 1973  
With an introduction by A. Wayne Amerson
- Arthur H. Sherry, The Alameda County District Attorney's Office and the California Crime Commission. 1974  
With an introduction by Ira M. Heyman, Professor of Law



Merrell F. Small, The Office of the Governor Under Earl Warren. 1972

Paul Schuster Taylor, California Social Scientist. 1973

Volume I, Education, Field Research, and Family.

With an introduction by Lawrence I. Hewes, Fellow, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, Santa Barbara

Volume II in process.

### Multi-Interview Volumes

California State Finance in the 1940's. 1974

With an introduction by Stanley Scott, Assistant Director, Institute of Governmental Studies

Fred Links, An Overview of the Department of Finance.

Ellis Groff, Some Details of Public Revenue and Expenditure in the 1940s.

George Killion, Observations on Culbert Olson, Earl Warren, and Money Matters in Public Affairs.

A. Alan Post, Watchdog on State Spending.

Paul Leake, Statement on the Board of Equalization.

Earl Warren's Bakersfield. 1971

Maryann Ashe and Ruth Smith Henley, Earl Warren's Bakersfield.

Omar Cavins, Coming of Age in Bakersfield.

Francis Vaughan, School Days in Bakersfield.

Ralph Kreiser, A Reporter Recollects the Warren Case.

Manford Martin and Ernest McMillan, On Methias Warren.

Earl Warren and Health Insurance: 1943-1949. 1971

Russel VanArsdale Lee, M.D., Pioneering in Prepaid Group Medicine.

Byrl R. Salsman, Shepherding Health Insurance Bills Through the California Legislature.

Gordon Claycombe, The Making of a Legislative Committee Study.

John W. Cline, M.D., California Medical Association Crusade Against Compulsory State Health Insurance.

Earl Warren and the State Department of Mental Hygiene. 1973

Frank F. Tallman, M.D., Dynamics of Change in State Mental Institutions.

Portia Bell Hume, M.D., Mother of Community Mental Health Services.

Earl Warren and the State Department of Public Health. 1973

With an introduction by E.S. Rogers, M.D., Dean, UC School of Public Health, 1946-51.

Malcolm H. Merrill, M.D., M.P.H., A Director Reminisces.

Frank M. Stead, Environmental Pollution Control.

Henry Ongerth, Recollections of the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering.

Kent A. Zimmerman, M.D., Mental Health Concepts.

Lawrence Arnstein, Public Health Advocates and Issues.





The Governor and the Public, the Press, and the Legislature. 1973  
Marguerite Gallagher, Administrative Procedures in Earl Warren's Office, 1938-1953.

Verne Scoggins, Observations on California Affairs by Governor Earl Warren's Press Secretary.

Beach Vasey, Governor Warren and the Legislature.

The Japanese-American Relocation Reviewed. 1974

With an introduction by Mike M. Masaoka, Former National Secretary and Washington Representative, Japanese American Citizens League.

Volume I Decision and Exodus (In process)

Volume II The Internment

Robert B. Cozzens, Assistant National Director of the War Relocation Authority.

Dillon S. Myer, War Relocation Authority: The Director's Account.

Ruth W. Kingman, The Fair Play Committee and Citizen Participation.

Hisako Hibi, paintings of Tanforan and Topaz camps.

Labor Looks at Earl Warren. 1970

Germaine Bulcke, A Longshoreman's Observations.

Joseph Chaudet, A Printer's View.

Paul Heide, A Warehouseman's Reminiscences.

U.S. Simonds, A Carpenter's Comments.

Ernest H. Vernon, A Machinist's Recollections.

Perspectives on the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. 1972

With an introduction by Arthur H. Sherry, Professor of Law

Volume I

John F. Mullins, How Earl Warren Became District Attorney.

Edith Balaban, Reminiscences about Nathan Harry Miller, Deputy District Attorney, Alameda County.

Judge Oliver D. Hamlin, Reminiscences about the Alameda County District Attorney's Office in the 1920's and 30's.

Mary Shaw, Perspectives of a Newspaperwoman.

Willard W. Shea, Recollections of Alameda County's First Public Defender.

Volume II

Richard Chamberlain, Reminiscences about the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Lloyd Jester, Reminiscences of an Inspector in the District Attorney's Office.

Beverly Heinrichs, Reminiscences of a Secretary in the District Attorney's Office.

Clarence Severin, Chief Clerk in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Homer R. Spence, Attorney, Legislator, and Judge.

E.A. Daly, Alameda County Political Leader and Journalist.

John Bruce, A Reporter Remembers Earl Warren.

Volume III

J. Frank Coakley, A Career in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

Albert E. Hederman, Jr., From Office Boy to Assistant District Attorney.

Lowell Jensen, Reflections of the Alameda County District Attorney.

James H. Oakley, Early Life of a Warren Assistant.





SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF, AND REFLECTIONS ON, 1942

Mike M. Masaoka

It is difficult more than three decades after the fact and with the advantage of hindsight to try to accurately reconstruct what happened--and why--to more than 110,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry residing on the West Coast of the United States after the outbreak of World War II on December 7, 1941.

And yet, as the National Secretary and Field Executive of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) at that time and later, after service with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in the European Theater, as the Washington JACL Representative for some 25 years, terminating on July 1, 1972, certain recollections remain quite vivid even today.

One is that probably more than any single person--in my judgment at least--Earl Warren influenced the Executive decision to authorize and carry out the mass military evacuation and exclusion of all persons of Japanese origin from all of California and the western halves of Arizona, Oregon, and Washington, without trial or hearing of any kind, at a time when all of our courts were functioning, early in 1942.

This remains my view today, even though Warren testified in San Francisco to the so-called Tolan Committee (Select House Committee on National Defense Migration) on February 21, 1942, two days after the President had signed Executive Order 9066 authorizing "any military areas" and to exclude therefrom "any and all persons".

To set the stage, it is to be recalled that immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor and for several weeks thereafter, then Attorney Gen-



eral of the United States Francis Biddle appealed for a distinction to be made between the so-called Japanese enemy and those of Japanese background residing in this country, calling for fair play and justice to those resident here.

For about a month, there was no serious demand for the mass evacuation of those of Japanese descent from the Pacific Slope. And the initial calls for evacuation were only for "aliens", and not native born citizens, even though alien Japanese could not become citizens of the United States through naturalization because of the prohibitions in federal statutes. Then, early in February, it seemed that an organized campaign was mounted by the pseudo patriots, the "yellow perilists" and the warmongers, and those who saw "profit" and economic gain for themselves in the total evacuation of all of Japanese race, without regard to citizenship, age, health, wealth, or reputation.

But, it was not until the likes of Earl Warren, a moderate and highly regarded lawyer, then the Attorney General of the State and a popular choice to be Governor of California in the 1942 election, urged the President, the War Department, and the Congress to conduct a mass evacuation of all of Japanese ancestry as "a measure of national security and military necessity" that the President and his associates accepted the recommendation, with the resulting Executive Order being issued on February 19, 1942.

In a lengthy prepared statement to the Tolan Committee, Warren submitted maps prepared by the various county district attorneys purporting to show that the Japanese owned, occupied, or controlled land adjacent to military installations, observing that such locations could not be "coincidence". He also identified alleged Japanese organizations, which included prefectural,





religious (Buddhist), cultural, educational, press, and even sports organizations, charging that they could engage in "widespread simultaneous campaign (s) of sabotage which could carry the most serious consequences". He claimed violations of the so-called alien land law and noted that the law enforcement officers of the state and the farm organizations favored the total removal of all Japanese.

In testimony to the Committee, Warren claimed that Japan had planned "fifth column activities, or sabotage, or war behind the lines upon civilians" for California. "For us to believe to the contrary is just not realistic," he said, adding that "Unfortunately, however, many of our people and some of our authorities and, I am afraid, many of our people in other parts of the country are of the opinion that because we have had no sabotage and no fifth column activities since the beginning of the war, that means that none have been planned for us. But I take the view that that is the most ominous sign in our whole situation. It convinces me more than perhaps any other factor that the sabotage that we are to get, the fifth column activities that we are to get, are timed just like Pearl Harbor was timed and just like the invasion of France, and of Denmark, and of Norway, and all of those other countries.

"I believe that we are being lulled into a false sense of security and that the only reason we haven't had a disaster in California is because it has been timed for a different date, and when that time comes if we don't do something about it, it is going to mean disaster both to California and to our Nation. When, nobody knows, of course, but we are approaching an invisible deadline."



Subsequently, Warren testified that "I want to say that the consensus of opinion among the law-enforcement officers of this State is that there is more potential danger among the group of Japanese who are born in this country than from the alien Japanese who were born in Japan. That might seem an anomaly to some people, but the fact is that, in the first place, there are twice as many of them. There are 33,000 aliens and there are 66,000 born in this country....

"While I do not cast a reflection on every Japanese who is born in this country--of course we will have loyal ones--I do say that the consensus of opinion is that taking the groups by and large, there is more potential danger to this State from this group that is born here than from the group that is born in Japan."

When Congressman Arnold of Illinois asked, "Do you have any way of knowing whether any one of this group is loyal to this country or loyal to Japan?", Warren responded, "Congressman, there is no way that we can establish that fact. We believe that when we are dealing with the Caucasian race we have methods that will test the loyalty of them, and we believe that we can, in dealing with Germans and Italians, arrive at some fairly sound conclusions because of our knowledge of the way they live in the community and have lived for many years. But when we deal with the Japanese, we are in an entirely different field and we cannot form any opinion that we believe to be sound. Their method of living, their language, make for this difficulty. Many of them who show you a birth certificate stating that they are born in this State, perhaps, or born in Honolulu, can hardly speak the English language because, although they were born here, when they were four or five years of age they were sent over to





Japan to be educated and they stayed over there through their adolescent period at least, and then they came back here thoroughly Japanese."

While we know that Warren testified in this vein to this Congressional committee after the President had issued the evacuation and exclusion order, at that time there were reports rampant that comments similar to his testimony and his prepared statement had been sent to members of the California delegation in the Congress, to the President, to the Secretary of War, and to the Attorney General of the United States, among others, in Washington.

In addition, Warren had expressed these same sentiments to newspaper and radio reporters, as well as to other public officials and civic leaders not only in California but elsewhere. Thus, others of reputation began to echo his explanations as if they were their own.

For instance, Walter Lippman, even then a revered columnist, wrote an article that is said to have made a great impression on many Washington officials. He repeated, and expanded on, the Warren theory that, since there had been no espionage or sabotage by the Japanese on the West Coast, this was a danger sign that those of Japanese ancestry were so well organized and disciplined that they were waiting for the invasion by the Japanese military before becoming active in planned sabotage activities.

In any event, from time to time, this recollection, that Earl Warren more than any other individual was responsible for the evacuation decision, has been confirmed. From some who were in the War Department, and others who were in the White House and in the Justice Department, at the time when the President was considering his decision on the subject, we have learned that what we suspected was fact.



Because the President and his civilian advisers were aware of the military's proclivities toward "over-reactions" in cases presumably involving "national security" and "military necessity", and because some of them suspected that during his tour of duty in the Philippines years earlier then-Commanding General of the Western Defense Command John L. DeWitt might have developed a "prejudice" against the Japanese, there was a tendency not to take the recommendations of the Army too seriously at first, especially since both Navy Intelligence and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had informed the President that, in their judgments, total evacuation of the West Coast Japanese was not necessary for "security" reasons.

Moreover, there was this same tendency to discount the demands from West Coast members of Congress, public officials, and most others because of their backgrounds and motivations.

When the "reasoned and documented" recommendations of Earl Warren, however, reached the highest levels of government decision-making in Washington, much of the confusion and controversy ceased and the President made his reluctant decision to authorize the evacuation and exclusion of citizen and alien Japanese alike from their homes and associations on the Pacific Coast.

It may be said that perhaps Warren to this day is unaware of the decisive role which he played in the Presidential order. In any event, it may be noteworthy to this date that Warren has not explained the reasons for his war-time views on Japanese Americans. Many of the others who had significant roles at that time have expressed regret over their attitudes then and confessed that they misjudged the loyalty and allegiance of those of Japanese ancestry to the United States.





Be that as it may, some commentators on the Supreme Court of the United States have indicated their belief that the World War II experience of Earl Warren with the Japanese may have contributed to the leadership he gave as Chief Justice to cases involving individual liberties and civil rights that have justly designated his stewardship of the nation's highest tribunal as the Warren Court.

Mike M. Masaoka  
Former National Secretary and  
Washington Representative  
Japanese American Citizens League

10 August 1973  
Washington, D.C.



## INTERVIEWERS' INTRODUCTION

The two-volume study of the Japanese-American Relocation in the Earl Warren Project of the Regional Oral History Office, subtitled Decision and Exodus and The Internment, was designed to investigate the decision-making process in the civilian and military departments of the federal government that led to Executive Order 9066--the evacuation order--and the administrative process of carrying out that order.\* Earl Warren, then attorney general of the state of California, has been subjected to sustained criticism in varying degrees for his alleged advocacy of mass evacuation.

Some of our memoirists agree with Mike Masaoka's evaluation of Warren's role. Mr. Masaoka, who kindly agreed to write the introduction to these volumes, was for twenty-five years Washington advocate for the Japanese American Citizens League. He thinks that Warren's was the deciding voice which convinced President Roosevelt, over the advice of the Justice Department and the Office of Naval Intelligence, that the Army's Western Defense Command reports on the security needs of California and the nation should be accepted and the Japanese-Americans evacuated en masse.

Mr. Masaoka says, "[P]robably more than any single person--in my judgement at least--Earl Warren influenced the Executive decision to authorize and carry out the mass military evacuation and exclusion of all persons of Japanese origin from all of California...without trial or hearing of any kind, at a time when all of our courts were functioning, early in 1942.

"This remains my view today, even though Warren testified in San Francisco to the so-called Tolan Committee (Select Committee on National Defense Migration) on February 21, 1942, two days after the President had signed Executive Order 9066..." [Mike Masaoka, Introduction, p.vi]

---

\*Executive Order 9066 was a federal order authorizing the Secretary of War and Military Commanders whom he might designate to prescribe military areas from which "any or all persons may be excluded." It nowhere mentioned Japanese or Japanese-Americans, but did lead directly to the exclusion of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the states of California, Oregon, and Washington. The War Relocation Authority was set up under Executive Order 9102 on March 18, 1942, and again, did not single out Japanese-Americans although they were the only ones who fell under its jurisdiction.





Dillon Myer, director of the War Relocation Authority, appraises Warren's role as less decisive. "[Earl Warren] was Attorney General during the period of the pressures for evacuation. He was, I think, part of the pressure."\* [Volume II, Dillon Myer, p. 8]

When these volumes were being discussed a much broader coverage of the subject was planned than we were able to execute. An obvious omission, much deplored by this office, is the absence of any Japanese-American memoirists. A short explanation of this is lack of funds. A longer explanation involves our obligation not to duplicate research already done at institutions such as the Japanese American Research Project at the University of California at Los Angeles and California State University at Fullerton.

Within these limits, the staff of the Regional Oral History Office then attempted to interview as many people as possible who had inside knowledge of the decision-making process which led to the evacuation order and who were concerned with the subsequent administration of camps set up under the War Relocation Authority.

The role of the United States Department of Justice in the decision-making process of defining and administering policy towards enemy aliens in general and Japanese-Americans in particular is described in Volume I, Decision and Exodus, in interviews with Edward Ennis, James Rowe, and Tom C. Clark. Repeatedly our memoirists expressed surprise and shock that the decision to move a whole racial group, citizen and non-citizen alike, was approved by President Roosevelt.

Mr. Ennis, a special assistant to the United States Attorney General in charge of war problems, became chief of the Justice Department's Alien Enemy Control Unit after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He contrasts the development of the Justice Department's program of selective internment of enemy aliens with the Western Defense Command's vigorous advocacy of a policy of evacuation of all Japanese-Americans.

---

\*For a contrary opinion see Jacobus tenBroek et al. who say, "California's attorney general in 1942, Earl Warren, has been charged by several writers with great if not crucial influence in promoting evacuation. However, an examination of the evidence fails to sustain the many allegations against him; and in particular there remains no proof that Warren ever publicly declared himself in favor of mass evacuation prior to mid-February." [p. 200.] Further, "It is a central contention of this book that the claim of "military necessity" was unjustified--but that the dereliction was one of folly, not of knavery." [p. 207-208.]

Prejudice, War and the Constitution: Causes and Consequences of the Evacuation of the Japanese Americans in World War II. Jacobus tenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart and Floyd W. Matson (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970).



James Rowe was assistant to Attorney General Francis Biddle and was also concerned with enemy aliens. He notes that the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Navy Intelligence, Army Intelligence, and the Justice Department all opposed mass evacuation of Japanese-Americans because, in their opinions, such a move would be illegal, unnecessary, and counter-productive for the control of espionage and sabotage since it would disturb established intelligence patterns. According to Rowe, those pressing for evacuation were Colonel Karl R. Bendetsen--"[A]s mainly responsible for it as any man." [p. 9], and Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy. He concludes that when Earl Warren, then California's attorney general and a candidate for the office of governor in 1942, with the support of western agriculturalists and most of the West Coast congressmen, called for removal of all Japanese-Americans from the West Coast, Roosevelt was evidently persuaded that mass evacuation was in the national interest at a time when an allied defeat seemed possible at the hands of both Germany and Japan.

Tom Clark, assistant U.S. attorney general in the Anti-Trust Division, served as civilian coordinator between the Justice Department and Western Defense Command. He describes his work of acquainting the public with the situation, investigating allegations of Japanese sabotage, and enforcing General DeWitt's curfew orders.

Our attempt to document the military point of view was only partially successful. Herbert Wenig, a deputy attorney general in the California Attorney General's office who spent the war years in the Judge Advocate General Corps as a legal assistant to General DeWitt, discusses the possible use of martial law in wartime, the development of a constitutional argument for relocation, the enforcement of the curfew laws, and the Mirobayashi, Korematsu, and Endo cases. However, a key figure who favored evacuation of all Japanese-Americans from the West Coast, Colonel Karl R. Bendetsen, assistant to General DeWitt, declined the invitation to be interviewed and referred researchers to the army records. A fuller account of his refusal appears in the interview history of the Edward Ennis memoir.

Volume II, The Internment, contains memoirs by Robert Cozzens, Dillon Myer, and Ruth Kingman. It is enhanced by two pages of reproductions of Hisako Hibi's paintings of Tanforan Assembly Center and Topaz Relocation Center.

Robert Cozzens served as assistant national director of the War Relocation Authority in San Francisco for the life of the agency. He was actively involved in selection of sites for camps, their day-to-day





administration, and served as acting director of Gila Relocation Center in Arizona. He comments on the successful campaign of commercial growers to abort the agricultural programs established at some centers. T.E. "Pat" Frayne, the War Relocation Authority's public relations officer, joined Mr. Cozzens for one interview and contributed much on publicity problems and the work of WRA in trying to smooth the way for Japanese-Americans returning to California towards the end of the war. Frayne comments on the change in Governor Warren's attitude to Japanese-Americans when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "[T]hese American concentration camps were unconstitutional...He said to Bob Cozzens, 'Well, I knew it was unconstitutional all the time.'" [p. 60]

Dillon Myer was director of the War Relocation Authority from June 17, 1942, until the program was officially terminated on June 30, 1946. He succeeded Milton Eisenhower who served from the creation of the agency in March until June, 1942. In his memoir, Myer discusses the problems of the War Relocation Authority primarily from the perspective of Washington. It is a valuable informal addition to Mr. Myer's book, Uprooted Americans\*, (the uncut manuscript version is in The Bancroft Library) and to his earlier autobiographical memoir.\*\*

Ruth Kingman was executive secretary of the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play--usually referred to as the Fair Play Committee. This was a group of prominent Californians who organized in the middle of 1941 to act as a counter-pressure group to various anti-Japanese hate groups. Once the evacuation policy had been announced, the Fair Play Committee worked actively to humanize the effects of it as much as possible. Mrs. Kingman worked full time to try to change public opinion; she visited relocation centers and traveled throughout the United States on behalf of the constitutional rights of Japanese-Americans. In addition to her account of the Fair Play Committee here, she contributed to her husband Harry Kingman's memoir which was prepared by this office.\*\*\*

---

\*Myer, Dillon S., Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority During World War II. (University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1971).

\*\*Myer, Dillon S., "An Autobiography of Dillon S. Myer," transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Helen S. Pryor in Washington, D.C., 1970, 409 pp. (In The Bancroft Library).

\*\*\*Kingman, Harry L., "Citizenship in a Democracy," typed transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Rosemary Levenson, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.



Mrs. Hisako Hibi kindly allowed us to use reproductions of twelve of her oils depicting Tanforan race track, where the stables were roughly converted into barracks to house an assembly center, and Topaz Relocation Center in central Utah. Mrs. Hibi, her husband the distinguished artist Matsusaburo (George) Hibi, and their two small daughters spent the war at Topaz where the Hibis ran arts and crafts schools for adults and children. The original canvasses range in size from sixteen by twenty inches to twenty by twenty-six inches. Mrs. Hibi has kindly donated many of the materials from those days to the Japanese American Research Project at UCLA, The Bancroft Library, and The Oakland Museum, History Department. Her curriculum vitae can be found with the reproductions in Volume II.

One final interview which should be noted is bound as an appendix to Volume II. Lila Andrews Wilson was interviewed by her son Joe Wilson in 1968. During World War II she was serving on the national board of the Young Women's Christian Association. She was asked by the executive board to look into the relocation of Japanese-Americans at Minidoka Relocation Center in Idaho, which she then visited for a week in 1943. She comments on the strict rationing of food and heat. Her statement that the Japanese Red Cross sent food parcels to American camps is contradicted by Robert Cozzens. However, in a recent book by Shizuye Takashima on Canadian camps for Japanese-Canadians, there is a reference to food parcels from Japan.\*

The subject of the Japanese-American evacuation is also discussed in Warren Project interviews appearing in other volumes. Extensive descriptions of the role of the California attorney general's office under Earl Warren in the evacuation appear in separately bound interviews with Warren Olney III, deputy attorney general in charge of the criminal division; Oscar Jahnsen, then the office's chief special agent; and Percy Heckendorf, district attorney of Santa Barbara County.

The anti-Japanese hysteria that whipped California is described in interviews with Merrell F. Small, a newspaper editor, and Richard Graves, who was head of the California civil defense. Mr. Graves also details the conflicts between civilian defense efforts and the military. Problems surrounding the return of the Japanese to California are discussed in an interview with Robert B. Powers, formerly chief of police of Bakersfield, California. Briefer treatment of aspects of Japanese-American relocation may be found by referring to the index heading of "Japanese" or "Japanese-American relocation" in other Warren Project interviews.

---

\*Takashima, Shizuye, A Child in Prison Camp. (Tundra Books of Northern New York, Plattsburg, 1971).





Further material on Japanese-Americans can be found in the Regional Oral History Office's interview with Helen Valeska Bary. She was a distinguished public servant who worked mainly in the fields of labor administration and social security in both state (California) and federal positions. In chapter XII of her interview, she describes her early experiences with Japanese farm laborers in the San Fernando Valley. By 1907, she noted that a favorable attitude was changing to increasing fear and envy as immigration from Japan increased, schools were set up, "picture brides" started to arrive, and the Japanese began successfully farming their own land. In 1941, she was assistant regional director for the Federal Security Agency. According to her information through Regional Director Richard Neustadt, Colonel Bendetsen was at first unwilling to go along with the idea of wholesale evacuation. In 1945, when Japanese-Americans started coming back to California, the FSA in cooperation with private agencies, tried to help individuals to make smooth transitions from camps to the outside world.

The Bancroft Library has an outstanding collection of material on the Japanese-American relocation and related subjects. The library holds duplicates of all War Relocation Authority papers, and all records of the University of California's Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study. The latter collection includes diaries, casebooks and unpublished studies. A descriptive listing of this material can be found in Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement: Catalog of Material in the General Library by Edward N. Barnhart (University of California, General Library, 1958). The complete files of the Fair Play Committee (Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play) are also held in the library and include a comprehensive file of newspaper clippings from West Coast publications. The papers of Senator Hiram W. Johnson have information on alien land laws and the problems of oriental immigration. Senator James D. Phelan's records document the anti-Japanese feelings in the '20s. The papers of Robert W. Kenny, who succeeded Earl Warren as attorney general in 1943, have information on law enforcement questions in the aftermath of the relocation.

The History Department of The Oakland Museum has three major collections on the history of the Japanese in California and the United States. From the Relocation period, there are objects made and used by Japanese-Americans in the Relocation Centers along with government announcements to people of Japanese ancestry. The museum holds, and is preparing for exhibition, a folding village from Japan which toured the major cities in the United States from 1885-1886 accompanied by Japanese craftsmen. It was called "The Great Exhibition of Japan (Dai Nippon Hakurankai)" and was sponsored by the Deakin Brothers of Yokohama and San Francisco. The Museum also holds portions of the Japanese sericulture exhibition and other exhibits from the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.



The library of the California Historical Society in San Francisco holds various collections of papers and an official compilation of military orders, notices, and directives concerning the relocation of Japanese-Americans promulgated in the name of the commanding officer of the 4th Army at the Presidio. Dr. Joseph R. Goodman's papers include the records of the Japanese American Citizens League, San Francisco chapter, January-June 1942 and personal letters, publications and government directives from both the assembly centers and relocation camps, particularly Topaz where Dr. Goodman taught high school.

The Japanese American Research Project at the University of California at Los Angeles was started in 1962 with an initial grant of \$100,000 from the Japanese American Citizens League to fund a study of the contribution of Japanese-Americans to America, and particularly to honor the Issei (first) generation of settlers. Their research staff conducted about 280 taped interviews for the historical aspects of the study. Additional funding from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Carnegie Institute led to a large three generation sociological study. The staff of the UCLA project was most cooperative and gave us permission to copy ten of their tapes selected by the Regional Oral History Office to complement our study. Interviews with Roger Baldwin, Francis Biddle, Gordon K. Hirabayashi, Clark H. Kawakami, Saburo Kido, Mike M. Masaoka, Katsuma Mukaeda, Dillon S. Myer, Masao W. Satow, and Dr. Newton K. Wesley\* were conducted by Joe Masaoka and Robert Wilson and may be listened to in The Bancroft Library. In addition to their large tape collection, the UCLA project has a splendid collection of papers, newspapers, pictures and other materials relating to Japanese-Americans and Japanese relations with America. Publications are expected shortly.

The Oral History Program at California State University, Fullerton, has about fifty interviews in their ongoing Japanese American Project. Thirty-five of these interviews are transcribed. Interviewees are predominantly Japanese-American; the subjects discussed range from experiences of the Nisei (second generation) in World War II to a Quaker who devoted the wartime years to serving Japanese-Americans in the Justice Department and relocation camps.\*\*

---

\*"Born Uyesugi, Wesley changed his name legally when his patients complained they couldn't find him in the directory under the W's." Bill Hosokawa, Nisei: The Quiet Americans. (New York, Morrow, 1969). [p. 485]

\*\*For a full listing see "A Guide for Oral History Programs" edited by Richard D. Curtiss, Gary L. Shumway and Shirley E. Stephenson, 1973. Available from the Oral History Program, California State University, Fullerton.





An outstanding bibliography was prepared by the junior members of the Japanese American Citizens League in 1969. It was reprinted in the Pacific Citizen, holiday issue, December 18-25, section D, 1970, and was compiled from the libraries of the University of California, Berkeley, California State Universities at Hayward, Sacramento, and San Jose, Chabot College, Monterey, Monterey Peninsula Library, Sacramento City and San Jose Colleges, the University of Santa Clara, Stanford University, and the public library in Stockton. Additional material can be found in the University of Washington library in Seattle.

There was a long period of oblivion and neglect by the public on the subject of the Japanese-American Relocation after World War II. This has changed significantly in recent years, and many books, academic, general, and fictional are now being published. An outstanding photographic exhibition, Executive Order 9066, which was prepared by the California Historical Society, aroused great public interest when it was shown in the Bay Area in February, 1972, at the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, and the University Art Museum in Berkeley during its lengthy nationwide tour.

The staff of the Regional Oral History Office would like to acknowledge the generous help given by our advisors. Mr. Dillon Myer, director of the War Relocation Authority and one of our memoirists, patiently served ROHO in providing introductions, assisting as interviewer, helping with funding, and acting as catalyst where needed. Officers of the Japanese American Citizens League were unfailingly helpful and courteous. Mr. Masao W. Satow, then national director of the JACL gave generously of his time. Mr. Mike Masaoka, for years Washington advocate for the JACL, was a continual support and most promptly agreed to write the introduction to these volumes for which we are very grateful. Mr. Bill Hosokawa, assistant editor of the Denver Post and author of Nisei: The Quiet Americans gave an hour of his time at the San Francisco airport between planes. Advice and help also came from many others whom we thank for their good counsel.

Rosemary Levenson  
Interviewer-Editor

Amelia Fry  
Interviewer-Editor

Miriam Feingold  
Interviewer-Editor

9 April 1974  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley



CHRONOLOGY OF EARL WARREN AND THE JAPANESE EVACUATION

1942

- January 30      Earl Warren in an Associated Press release: *"I have come to the conclusion that the Japanese situation as it exists in this state today, may well be the Achilles heel of the entire civilian defense effort. Unless something is done it may bring about a repetition of Pearl Harbor."*
- February 2      Conference of sheriffs and district attorneys called by Earl Warren on subject of alien land law enforcement. Sheriffs and D.A.s agreed to draw up maps showing location of Japanese holdings.
- February 7      Earl Warren declares unconstitutional a state personnel board order barring from civil service positions all citizens who were "descendants" of alien enemies.
- February 7      Earl Warren at California Joint Immigration Committee: *"What we need now...is action, and I think we ought to urge the military command in this area to do the things that are obviously essential to the security of this State."*
- February 12      Walter Lippmann's column, "The Fifth Column on the Coast."
- February 16      Westbrook Pegler's column supporting Lippmann.
- February 19      Executive Order No. 9066
- February 21      Earl Warren testifies before Tolan Committee (House Committee on Interstate Migration): Stresses danger of Japanese; little danger from Germans and Italians. Fear of vigilantism if government didn't step in. No information about sabotage ever received from Japanese. Evidence from maps. Removal of Japanese wouldn't upset agriculture.







*Exhibition Designed by*  
**Maisie & Richard Conrat**

Exhibition prints were made by General Graphic Services of San Francisco from War Relocation Authority negatives provided by The National Archives and Records Service.

# EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066

*An Exhibition Produced by the*

## CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The days following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor were dark days of the American spirit. Unable to strike back effectively against the Japanese Empire, Americans in the Western states lashed out at fellow citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry. Executive Order 9066, signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, was the instrument that allowed military commanders to designate areas "from which any or all persons may be excluded." Under this order all Japanese and Americans of Japanese ancestry were removed from Western coastal regions to guarded camps in the interior.

**Executive Order 9066** is an image distilled by Maisie and Richard Conrat from some 25,000 photographs of the experience of 110,000 American Japanese. About one-third of the photographs in this exhibition were made by the great Western photographer Dorothea Lange.

# OPENS JAN. 5

TO FEB. 20 AT

**M. H. de Young  
Memorial Museum**  
SAN FRANCISCO

10 am-5 pm daily

TO FEB. 13 AT

**University  
Art Museum**  
BERKELEY

11 am-5 pm Wednesday-Sunday

*Panel 1 — DOROTHEA LANGE, WRA, Hayward, Calif., May 8, 1942: Evacuation day.*

*Panel 3 — DOROTHEA LANGE, WRA, Manzanar, Calif., July 3, 1942: Young man at Manzanar Relocation Center. His Caucasian wife is living with him in the camp, together with their small child.*

*Panel 5 — DOROTHEA LANGE, WRA, Manzanar, Calif., July 2, 1942.*

*Panel 6 — PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, from Yusen Kawashima, Kariforunia Kaika Ibun (Tokyo, 1932): California farmer near Lemoore, Kings Co., c. 1920.*

*Panel 7 — PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, from R. Suzuki, The Development of the Inter-Mountain Japanese Colonies (Denver, n.d.): A secretary from the Japanese Embassy (seated with white hat) together with members of the Japanese community in Cheyenne, Wyoming, c. 1915.*

*Panel 8 — PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, from "Prominent Americans Interested in Japan and Prominent Japanese in America", Japanese in California (San Francisco, 1903).*

*Panel 9 — PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN — from Yusen Kawashima, History of the Settling of California (Tokyo, 1932): California berry farmer, c. 1925.*

*Panel 10 — PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, from Sydney Gulick, The American Japanese Problem (New York, 1914): "The mother and son... are pure Japanese. The mother came as a young girl to California, where the son was born."*







Hisako Hibi

CURRICULUM VITAE

PAINTINGS OF TANFORAN ASSEMBLY CENTER  
AND TOPAZ RELOCATION CENTER



HISAKO HIBI

*Born in a zen home, Japan, and came to the United States as a young girl with her parents. She studied at the California School of Fine Arts, now the San Francisco Art Institute, married and has two children and four grandchildren.*

- Prior to World War II      Exhibited at California State Fair, Oakland Art Gallery, San Francisco Art Association Annuals. Also 1939 and 1940 California Art Exhibition at Golden Gate International Exposition, Treasure Island.
- 1941      December--with the outbreak of World War II, more than 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were uprooted from the Pacific Coast States and sent to the inland camps.
- 1942      May--she and her family were sent to Topaz Relocation Camp in Utah where they stayed until the war ended.
- 1945      September--the family relocated to New York City. Two years later her husband, an oil and woodblock print artist, died. She became a dressmaker, worked in a factory.
- 1952, 1953      Studied (once a week) at Victor D'Amico's art class, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 1954      Summer--returned to San Francisco, worked at Lilli Ann, Betty Clyne dress shops and as a housekeeper in a private home.
- 1961      Became a member of San Francisco Women Artists.
- 1966, 1967      Studied at Ann O'Hanlon's perception workshop, University of California Extension.
- 1967, 1970      Exhibited at California State Fair.  
Exhibited at Kingsley Art Club, Crocker Gallery, Sacramento.





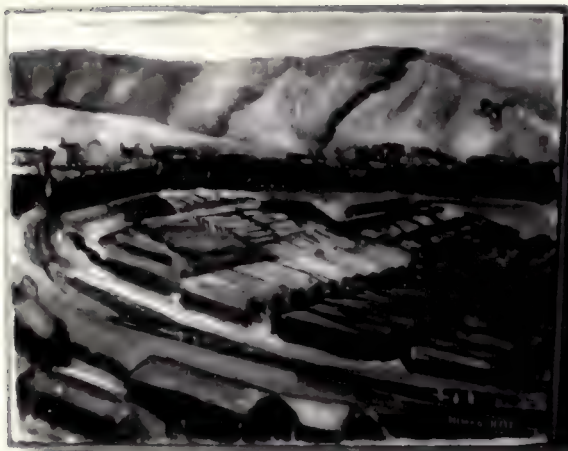
- 1968 An honorable mention, San Francisco Women Artists Small Format Show.
- 1964, 1970 San Francisco City Purchase Awards at San Francisco Art Festival.
- 1970 May--one-man show, Lucien Labaudt Art Gallery, San Francisco.
- 1971 April--Sight and Insight Gallery, The Cannery Group Show.  
June-July--Exhibit, Humanist House Gallery, San Francisco.
- 1972 February-March--Group show, California Historical Society.  
April--Group show, undergraduate library, Stanford University.  
June--Group show, Music Center, Los Angeles, California.  
July 3-28--Attended the Art Seminar-workshop sponsored by Museum of Modern Art, directed by Victor D'Amico at Kearsarge Art Center, Amagansett, Long Island, New York.
- 1973 July--Left for Japan to visit her mother and wishes to restudy her traditions and so on.

"FOREVER MOVING, changing forms of our human society in the vastness of the universe, I wish to seek something beautiful in line, color, and form that communicates to everything, every place in peace."

Sincerely,  
Hsuko Ito.

March 4, 1973





Tanforan Assembly Camp .















The Bancroft Library

University of California/Berkeley  
Regional Oral History Office

Earl Warren Oral History Project

Robert B. Cozzens

ASSISTANT NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

An Interview Conducted by  
Rosemary Levenson







Robert B. Cozzens

1945



TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Robert B. Cozzens

INTERVIEW HISTORY	1
I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY	1
<u>Cozzens' Background and Appointment to WRA</u>	1
<u>Henry Wallace's Committee on the Question of Evacuation</u>	3
<u>Clark's Visit, Economic Pressures and Rumors</u>	4
<u>Site Selection</u>	6
<u>Dillon Myer as Director of the War Relocation Authority</u>	9
<u>Selection of Staff</u>	10
II. ADMINISTRATION OF THE CENTERS	15
<u>Problems of Settling in: the Heating Crisis at Gila, Arizona</u>	15
<u>Food and Agriculture</u>	16
<u>Industry in the Camps</u>	17
<u>The Center Schools</u>	18
<u>Hospitals and Health Care</u>	21
<u>The "Japanese Red Cross" and Visiting Church Groups</u>	22
<u>Mrs. Roosevelt's Visit to Gila, Poston and Manzanar</u>	23
III. PRESSURES FROM ALL SIDES	25
<u>Troubles in the Centers: Gila</u>	25
<u>Trouble at Tule Lake</u>	26
<u>The Press and Tule Lake</u>	29
<u>Congressional Committees and the WRA</u>	31
<u>Pressures on the Cozzens Family</u>	33
IV. RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN	35
<u>Nisei Volunteers and the 442nd</u>	35
<u>Earl Warren and Resettlement: Attitude Change</u>	37
<u>Problems with Beck and the Teamsters</u>	41
<u>Terrorist Incidents and Intimidation of Japanese-Americans</u>	44



<u>Incidents at Hood River, Oregon</u>	47
<u>Renunciants and the Return to Japan</u>	48
<u>Effects of Resettlement out of the Centers</u>	49
V. WRA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS with T. E. "Pat" Frayne, Public Relations Officer, War Relocation Authority	51
<u>Frayne's Newspaper Background</u>	51
<u>Initial Problems</u>	54
<u>The "Japanese" Shelling of Santa Barbara: A Stunt by the Treasury to Promote the Sale of War Bonds?</u>	58
<u>Relations with Earl Warren</u>	60
<u>Anti-Japanese-American Moves in the California Legislature</u>	62
<u>Helping with Resettlement: Shelley and Labor</u>	63
<u>The Fair Play Committee</u>	64
<u>Roosevelt's Ploy</u>	66
<u>Robert Kenny's Assistance to WRA</u>	66
<u>Dealing with Rumors: The Case of the "Anti-Japanese Army Dogs"</u>	68
<u>Frayne Accused of Communism as a Result of His Work with WRA</u>	72
APPENDIX A: Letter from James Lawrence Fly, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, to Francis Biddle, United States Attorney-General, on the accuracy of General DeWitt's Final Report on Japanese Evacuation. April 4, 1944.	74
APPENDIX B: Letter from Dillon S. Myer to Harry L. Kingman on congressional pressure against commercial agricultural production in the Centers. June 11, 1943.	78
APPENDIX C: Letter from Robert B. Cozzens to Jess Edington, Commander of the American Legion Post, Hood River, Oregon. December 4, 1945.	79
APPENDIX D: "The Future of America's Japanese." An address by Robert B. Cozzens to the Peace Officers of California. Given October 9, 1945.	81
APPENDIX E: Address by Robert B. Cozzens to the Pacific Coast Section, American Society of Agricultural Engineers. Given February 26, 1946.	91
INDEX	105





## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Robert B. Cozzens was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to record his contribution to the humane and efficient administration of the War Relocation Authority where he served as Assistant National Director on the West Coast during and after World War II. Mr. Cozzens asked E. T. "Pat" Frayne, the very effective public relations officer of the War Relocation Authority from 1943 to the closing of the agency, to join him for our last interview to fill in the story.

### Conduct of the Interviews

Three interviews were held on November 16, 1970, April 14 and May 21, 1971. The first two took place in the Cozzens' charming cottage in the Carmel Valley and the third, for everyone's convenience, in a motel on the San Francisco Peninsula.

The first, intended as a planning session, yielded such valuable material that it was incorporated into the manuscript. The second and third followed stricter agendas utilizing papers that Mr. Cozzens had had time to review. Some of this material is included as appendices. Unfortunately, in the course of moving, some of the Cozzens' papers and memorabilia were lost.

To begin the interviews, Mr. Cozzens briefly sketched in his background and accounted for his sudden conscription from the Soil Conservation Service to WRA and described the terms under which he accepted the draft. Milton Eisenhower was briefly the first head of WRA; through SCS, Mr. Eisenhower had come to know Cozzens well and chose him for his second in command. Cozzens had also shared responsibilities in SCS with Dillon Myer. This background laid the groundwork for their excellent working relationship which prevailed when Myer succeeded Eisenhower as Director of WRA in June, 1942.

Mr. Cozzens went on to describe some of the initial problems of the agency, which included serious attempts at bribery to influence his choice of sites for the camps. He also discussed the stimulus to staff accomplishments in the crisis situation which obtained when 120,000 people of all ages had to be moved, fed, housed, educated, and given medical care. Red tape was kept to a minimum and opportunities were given for rapid promotion and personal initiative (p 12).

Throughout the history of the WRA, the primary aim of the heads of the organization and the staff they selected was to protect the basic rights of Japanese-Americans under the terms of the Executive Order



stipulating evacuation from the three Western States. The humane administration of Dillon Myer and Bob Cozzens attracted the hostility of hate groups. The agency was severely harassed by Congressional committees and Mr. Cozzens and his family were labelled "Jap lovers" by some sections of the community. He described one of the most unpleasant incidents in the hate campaign when anonymous phone calls continued to come in after midnight on the night his older daughter died (pp 33-34).

For economy and to occupy the Center residents, Mr. Cozzens made successful attempts to establish viable agricultural communities. These were aborted by pressures from commercial growers. The Teamsters Union, under Dave Beck, was responsible for many of the expropriations of Japanese truck farmers and market operators from Los Angeles to Seattle. The situation was finally rectified in 1945-46 when the threat of Army intervention somewhat alleviated the situation (pp 41-44).

To hasten the reabsorption of Japanese-Americans into the mainstream of American life, Mr. Cozzens gave recruiting talks for the famous Nisei 442nd. When asked why he did it and not an Army officer, he replied, "I don't know except that the Japanese had known me for a number of years and trusted me" (p 37). He worked as actively as possible to help Japanese-Americans relocate outside the Centers and the prohibited Western States. Mr. Myer, in Washington, and Cozzens on the West Coast, did all they could to counter the pressures of the Southern bloc in Congress which joined with the Western anti-Japanese "Yellow Peril" hate groups to discredit the WRA. Some of these groups hoped to secure the permanent exclusion of all Japanese-Americans from the United States.

Pat Frayne shared the fifth chapter with Mr. Cozzens and gave much information on the public relations problems of the agency. Reference was twice made in the memoir to a crucial meeting with Governor Warren (pp 37-41 and 60-61). Warren's attitude of formal support for the peaceful return of Japanese-Americans was helpful though not wholly effective in strengthening the hands of state and local officials who wished to protect Japanese-Americans against varying degrees of harassment and to enforce the law.

The interviews were transcribed, edited by the interviewer for continuity, and sent to Mr. Cozzens and Mr. Frayne for their review. Both made a few minor corrections which were incorporated into the final typed copy. The manuscript was then proofed and indexed.

Rosemary Levenson  
Interviewer-Editor

14 July 1973  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley





## I ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

### Cozzens' Background and Appointment to WRA

- Levenson: Mr. Cozzens, what was your position in the War Relocation Authority?
- Cozzens: I was Assistant National Director of WRA and was stationed on the West Coast all the time.
- Levenson: So you were responsible for the administration of the whole program under Dillon Myer?
- Cozzens: Yes. That's right.
- Levenson: What sort of background did you have for the job?
- Cozzens: Of course, I had lived among Japanese all my life. I came to Watsonville originally in 1916, and I'd been in and out of there all the time. I was the vice president and superintendent for one of the larger construction companies. I had built roads all over California, Nevada, Arizona, Yosemite Valley, up and down the Coast, and been in all types of construction. And, prior to the depression days, I did a lot of irrigation work. When the depression hit, we lost everything we had. I went to work for [the federal] government in the Soil Conservation Service, as Assistant Regional Director in this area -- Nevada, and California, with my headquarters in Watsonville.

Two years after I was there, I passed up the Assistant Director's job which would have meant moving to Santa Paula, California to become State Coordinator for Soil Conservation Service, with headquarters at Berkeley. I moved to Berkeley in '37. Well, through that connection -- Milton Eisenhower was then Coordinator for the Secretary of Agriculture's office in Washington, and Milton and I became very close because of my seeing him practically every time I was in Washington. I



Cozzens: was there quite frequently, and he knew of my connection and intimacy with Japanese people and what have you.

When the war came along, I got a call one Wednesday morning, and it was Milton Eisenhower stating that he'd just been appointed by the President as Director of the War Relocation Authority, and I said, "Where are you?" and he said, "I'm in the Whitcomb Hotel in San Francisco. How soon can you get over here?" I said, "Well, I can't get over there for a couple of hours." I had some work to do. I said, "I'll be there in a couple of hours." He said, "Well, I'd like to have you here as soon as you can."

When I got there, our old personnel officer of Soil Conservation Service was there with him, and a number of other people whom I knew from Washington. We chatted for a few minutes and he asked me what I knew about the Japanese situation in California. Then he said, "When are you going to work for us?" I said, "I'm not going to work for you." And he said to Mr. [Leland] Barrows, "You'd better show him the papers." I'd already been transferred, a draft deal was available at that time the day before. I was already working for him! So that's how I came to be in WRA.

Levenson: How did you feel about it?

Cozzens: For the minute, I didn't like it. I didn't like being pushed around. But after we chatted for a few minutes he said, "How soon can you be here?" I said, "Well, I've got to close my office. I can't be here till Saturday." He said, "You have to select sites for 110,000 people, and you have six weeks to do it." And he said, "What do you want?" I said, "I'll be here Saturday morning, but what I want when I get here, is authority from the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Interior to call any office west of the Mississippi, and have the director of either group instructed to comply with my or WRA requests. We must have this if we're going to move."

Levenson: What offices were these?

Cozzens: These were Forestry Service, anybody in Interior, anybody in Agriculture. I think I had sixty-four telegrams when I arrived there Saturday morning, copies of telegrams that had



Cozzens: been sent to these people. We had no furniture. I sat on the floor and worked on two chairs. I called thirty to forty offices in Idaho, Montana, Utah, (I couldn't use Oregon, Washington, or Arizona) I requested they have a man in San Francisco on Tuesday morning. They arrived on Tuesday morning, we told them what we wanted, we had maps prepared, we sent them home, and in a week after that we had about sixty site prospects all over the Western states, all laid out for us, and these boys did a great job. In the meantime I had selected my own group which I could use in the site selection process.

#### Henry Wallace's Committee on the Question of Evacuation

Levenson: You mentioned earlier a committee set up at the request of Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace, to discuss the question of whether evacuation of Japanese from the West Coast was advisable. Can you tell me who else served on the committee, what your conclusions were and what happened to your report?

Cozzens: I don't know that the report ever got into print. Now Dean [Claude B.] Hutchinson\*, Dr. [B.H.] Crocheron and myself were the committee as I remember it, which was requested by the Secretary [Wallace] to report on whether an evacuation should take place or not. I think we met only twice. Both times our feeling was that it was not necessary to move the Japanese out of California. If they were moved from any place where the army felt there was going to be any difficulty, they should be moved from that area, only for their own good. The committee felt that each location where the Japanese were located should have a committee of non-Japanese farmers or individuals appointed to work with these people continuously and be a guiding and protective group for them. We felt at that time that this could be handled in that way without any problem.

I am sure the report was written. I don't ever remember whether I signed it or whether I didn't. Crocheron's office was going to take care of it.

---

\*Hutchinson, Claude B., "The College of Agriculture, University of California, 1922-52," typed transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Willa K. Baum, University of California General Library Cultural History Project, (Berkeley, 1961). Pages 117-118, 434.





Cozzens: I don't think that the report was ever published. I think it probably got to Wallace but I don't think it went any further.

Levenson: It must have been a strange time. I was listening to an interview with Saburo Kido\*, who was beaten up in one of the camps. He was saying that when the Tolan Committee met he didn't realize how important it was and Mike Masaoka went to the hearings but Kido was at the dentist! Very few of the people who opposed the evacuation actually spoke up at the time.

Cozzens: That's right. They didn't have many there at the meeting.

#### Clark's Visit, Economic Pressures and Rumors

Cozzens: The next thing we knew, Mr. [Tom C.] Clark was here from Washington.

Levenson: Tom Clark of the Supreme Court?

Cozzens: He was in the Justice Department then, and was sent out here by the President to make an investigation. The powers that be got to Tom, and the pressures were on. I attended a meeting in San Francisco, and they said, "Let's move them out. Let's move 'em out. Anybody can make money on forty cents a bunch for carrots."

Levenson: Who were the powers that be?

Cozzens: Well, a little bit of everybody. They were the agricultural people, any place that the Japanese were interfering with their business. They were anxious to see them move, because economically there was money to be made.

Levenson: Wasn't there money to be made for everybody at that time?

Cozzens: At that time. The pressures were so great that people were frantic. They lied about what happened. I attended another meeting, which would be very interesting. The papers in this

---

\*UCLA Japanese-American Research Project



Cozzens: country printed that they heard Japanese broadcasting from here to Japan, here in the Monterey area. There are people in Salinas today who still believe it who are friends of mine. Around the Bay Area they said that they were broadcasting overseas and what have you. They saw all kinds of signs, and lamps lit, and candles burning, and this thing and that.

I attended a meeting where General [John L.] DeWitt was told by someone from the Communications Center that in the first place they did not have equipment in the Presidio able to monitor that type of broadcast. And the people that they heard broadcasting in Japanese were the American Japanese who were broadcasting first from San Francisco and then later from Salt Lake City to Japan. Our own people that were being paid to do it, similar to a Voice of America program. I forget what they called it at that time. And that they did not have equipment suitable at that time in San Francisco to monitor that type of program, and had they had the equipment, they did not have anybody at the Presidio who knew enough about it to take care of it. That's how far we were behind the times.\*

I think a lot of the evacuation was caused by panic. Panic on the part of our military people, and panic on the part of everyone on the Coast. We were not equipped for it. And if we were, we didn't know what to do about it.

The other thing that is of interest is that, all during the time of evacuation, we had not only one group, but two or three groups on the Coast that worked steadily trying to breed discontent on the Coast, so that these people could never return. In the Los Angeles market area, the people who had booths down there where they sold produce, Americans or Italians or what have you, paid every month to the big guys who came around and said, "You must contribute so we can keep the Japanese out." That same thing was true in the Northwest -- I don't want to get ahead of the story on this thing, but all up and down the Coast we had continuous discontent brought about by these people who were paid agents to keep the Japanese from ever coming back.

---

\*See Appendix A





Levenson: Who were "the big guys" and "paid agents"?

Cozzens: That I can't put my finger on, the people who did the talking about this, in most cases were rather mediocre people, but they got paid by somebody to do it. They were well-paid evidently, because we know that the collections were made. These people in the small booths confided in me, personally, to the point of saying, "I must pay. If I don't pay, I'll be thrown out of here."

### Site Selection

Levenson: Was site selection your number one priority?

Cozzens: That's right. My main work, beginning under Milton Eisenhower, was the selection of sites. I selected all the sites for the Relocation Centers, with the exception of the two in Arkansas. I approved those, but they were selected before I had time to get back there. Then, after the sites were selected, I did the negotiations with the Army Engineers and the clearing or the approving of the type of construction for the centers.

After the people were moved, why, I was in charge of operations for all of the centers west of Salt Lake City. I didn't go to Arkansas, or those centers. They handled those out of Washington, D.C. That included all the foreign programs and educational programs, and everything else that went along with it.

In locating the centers, I was given a map, both by the Navy and the Army, which showed how we would perform on later echelons if we were attacked and had to move back from the Coast. But I never divulged this to anyone. My assistants used to think I was crazy. My investigators that I had in the field thought I didn't know what I was talking about, because I would turn down sites that they had selected. They would bring back good information, and I would say, "I don't like it. It's not in the right place. I don't think it's any good." It was too close to some proposal where we would have been had we moved back, don't you see? That was never divulged to anyone.



Levenson: What were your criteria for selecting sites?

Cozzens: I couldn't be close to a proposed military site in case we had to move back, in a second or third or fourth echelon. I could only use so many pounds of copper wire for hooking up the power, so I had to be close to that. I couldn't be close to an airport, I couldn't be close to any Navy installation that might be set up at any later date. So all of those things had to be considered in making the selections. Nobody knew those things but myself and the Army and the Navy.

I had to be able to produce food. Later I couldn't produce it, because they didn't let us do it for political reasons.

Levenson: What was the situation in Colorado? I understand that the Governor there actually invited the Japanese in, and that was one of the reasons that the Japanese language school moved to Boulder.

Cozzens: I don't know about that particular situation. I know the pressures were on for us to locate a site in Colorado. They wanted a site in Colorado. But I thought it was economic pressures more than anything else. The then Senator used all kinds of pressures, just verbal pressures to me, to try to get us to select a site in Colorado.

Levenson: Was it profitable to the state to have a site?

Cozzens: Well, it could have been, had we selected the site, but we didn't take it. I got a terrible bawling out from the Senator. I told him if he would forego his Congressional immunity and write me a letter and tell me everything he told me over the phone was true, and swear to it before a notary, that I would approve the site on his say-so. He called me everything he could think of, and said I was crazy, and then told Milton Eisenhower that "That guy Cozzens is just plain nuts! He won't go along with me."

Levenson: I'd like to hear what sorts of things that Senator told you!

Cozzens: Well, it was just that the site was good and everything about the site was good, which was not true. He had been misinformed. I don't think he knew the difference. But I think the pressures were on.



Levenson: I'm interested in those pressures. Why was it so desirable to have a camp?

Cozzens: We could have purchased all these sites, had we wanted to. I had full authority to recommend that we purchase these sites. I looked at sites that were ten to twelve million dollars. They would probably have wanted eight to ten million dollars for this site in Colorado. I selected a piece of government land out in eastern Colorado that didn't cost us anything, because it was only going to be for a short time, but the group that would have benefited from this defunct irrigation district that they wanted to sell to the government, would have made ten million dollars. We never got into any of that.

Levenson: Did you purchase any sites?

Cozzens: No. We finally wound up with not purchasing any sites. We either located on federal land, or Indian reservations, or things of that kind. We were all on federal land. We wound up without spending any money. We would have had probably in the neighborhood of a hundred million dollars for purchasing which we turned back to the government. We never used any of it. We didn't think it was wise to spend that kind of money.

You talk about pressures! I had offers of everything in the world -- that I wouldn't have to work the rest of my natural life, had I done the things that certain people wanted me to do. But we never did. So our skirts were clear. Always clear.

Levenson: What sorts of offers did you get?

Cozzens: Well, if I would locate a site in a certain area, and buy that land, that I'd never have to work the rest of my natural life. I told this gentleman, I said, "I'm just too busy to talk to you, now. If you'll come back Monday and bring all the maps and everything else to me and show me exactly what you have in mind, I'll be glad to listen to you." So he returned with his attorney on Monday. I told my secretary, "When such-and-so shows up, bring in your book, come in and sit down, and take notes of everything that's said." He





Cozzens: walked in and said, "I understood this was to be a private meeting." I said, "It is, and I'm too busy to remember everything that goes on. Everything I know, my secretary knows." He just got up, looked at his attorney, his attorney shook his head. He got up and said, "Cozzens, you're a damn fool!" and walked out. That's just one of many such things.

In Arizona we had a similar thing, in two different sites down there. It just went on continually; if we'd wanted to be crooked, we could have been. Thank God we weren't. We didn't have any of it. That's one thing. Mr. Myer told the President that WRA would be out of business six months after the war was over. We were out of business six months after it was over. We were the only war agency in government that ever has gotten out of business.

#### Dillon Myer as Director of the War Relocation Authority

Levenson: What were Dillon Myer's\* great qualities as Director of WRA?

Cozzens: Well, Mr. Myer is a very, very smooth operator of people. He's a very clever individual. He's got oodles of poise, just lots and lots of poise. He can take lots of abuse. He's very confident of himself. I've never seen him lack confidence in what he was doing. If he knows what he wants to do, he will stay with it, regardless. He'll hang on forever. Its just one of those things. He'll not give up.

He has a lot of ability to wait for the right moment. And the other thing is, that he believes as I do that no person should ever go hunting with an empty gun. He doesn't like to take somebody on unless he has the thing documented and he has the information and ready to go. That is the way he's won his battles in Congress; that is the way he's won his battles in investigating committees.

---

\*See interview with Dillon S. Myer, this volume.



Selection of Staff

- Levenson: There must have been a problem in the selection of personnel, with the wartime shortage of manpower. How did you go about it?
- Cozzens: While there was a problem in selecting personnel, particularly camp managers -- the final selection, or course, was Mr. Myer's decision. To give you an example, Ralph Merritt was camp director at Manzanar. He was the person who established Sun Maid raisins, and at one time, in his early twenties, was president of some big raisin growers association at a salary of about \$75,000 a year, which was a lot of money in those days.
- Levenson: It still is.
- Cozzens: Still is is right! Ralph was out of that. He had lost out. He was controller for the University of California when I first knew him. Then he went from controller of the University of California to the Sun Maid Raisin Growers Association. He was out there, I don't know just what he was doing prior to the war. But he dropped into San Francisco and talked with me. So I recommended Ralph to the director, and he had the qualifications which were needed in one of those centers. He was a great peace maker. I guess Ralph was seventy-two or three years old when he became director of Manzanar.
- Levenson: A tough job for a man of that age!
- Cozzens: Yes, well I wouldn't hesitate to do it today and I'm a lot older than that! He did a wonderful job. Ralph was right around in his seventies when he went there. He did a great job. Our most difficult problem with Ralph was that he didn't want to give up the center. He thought those Japanese-Americans who wanted to should stay there, that it was very dangerous to move them back. He felt that they should come back more gradually than Mr. Myer and I wanted to do it. We made up our mind that we were going to get rid of the camps. I think you can let a thing like this drag and had Mr. Myer permitted it to drag, we'd still be having problems. We'd still be having problems today. But we got them back in six months and they were here. What are you going to do about it? They're here.





Cozzens: The problems that we had after they got back here, were very easily ironed out because they were small problems. Had we dragged that thing out a year or more which most people wanted to do, we'd still be having problems today.

Levenson: This brings me to a question. There is a unique quality to WRA. It was in one sense a disgraceful thing that it had to exist.

Cozzens: That's right.

Levenson: But once it existed it seems to me that Mr. Myer and yourself and many of the other people in it brought to it great qualities of humanity and service that one doesn't normally associate with bureaucrats -- if you will excuse me. I want to know what made Mr. Myer such an effective, as well as compassionate director -- and yourself, and obviously many of the people like Ralph Merritt and others who should be mentioned, so that the thing was run as well as it could possibly be?

Cozzens: Well, I think it goes back to this: I think that you have -- you see I have the very fortunate position, more than anybody else in WRA of having been in private life and private work prior to going with government -- way more than twenty years in private business where my whole life was built around very competitive business and making money. Then I went to work for government during the Depression and during that time many people who went to the government during the Depression had been people who had been in some pretty well-paying positions prior to that. Mr. Myer had been an Extension agent in Ohio. During the Depression he went with Triple A [Agriculture Adjustment Administration].

Milton Eisenhower had moved in and he was in the coordinator's office under Wallace in the Department of Agriculture. Milton was our first director. I had worked with Milton prior to the war for about five years, because I was assistant Regional director of Soil Conservation service in California and was also State Coordinator in California. Then the war came along, the Executive Order that was issued gave anybody in a wartime governmental agency the right to draft anybody from any other agency that they wanted, without anything happening. Milton left WRA to go with Elmer Davis in the Office of War Information.



Cozzens:

When they first wanted to appoint Elmer Davis he said he wouldn't take that office unless Milton was his assistant. So that's what happened. Then Milton called me and said he wouldn't be out any more. I asked who was going to get this position? He said he was sure that I would like him and that I knew him very well. Well, when he said that, why I was sure it was Dillon and I said, "Well is it Dillon?" "I can't make the statement," he said. "The President has to announce that today."

So Mr. Myer and I had worked very closely together when he was assistant chief of Soil Conservation Service in Washington at the time when I was in the Soil Conservation Service. So I had lived in his home there; he had lived in mine here when he was here. We were very close friends. Then when this came along, Mr. Eisenhower asked me what I wanted in order to make these selections and as I think I told you once before I wanted authority to call anybody in Agriculture or the Interior in any of the eleven western states. I could have drafted any of those people and some of them we did. But we had the full cooperation of everybody in every agency. There's lots of things in government that I despise. I despise the empire-builders, I despise the people who feel that they can only be judged by how prominent they are, by the number of people who work for them. I think it is a mistake in government. I was always criticized in government because I didn't complete my staff. I'd always make people work too hard. That is the only criticism I've ever had on any of my records that I had in government. We got the work completed and I felt that we didn't need extra people. A large portion of people in government are dedicated people. There is no question about it -- they were the chiefs of bureaus, heads of bureaus, heads of divisions. The other things that made it possible were rapid promotions and the opportunity for personal initiative.

For instance, Ray Best, who handled Tule Lake finally -- he was our last director up there and did a grand job, was with Soil Conservation Service, I think in Idaho. This was quite a challenge to him. He moved up a number of steps in order to take this job, because he had that ability. He was being held down prior to that. Many of these people who did these things for us were people who had never had to move this fast.



Cozzens:

The other thing was that they had never had the privilege to move that fast in government. Prior to this anybody who worked for government made out a form or requested this, they asked for it, they put it in, they waited. In WRA we told them that it had to be done by tomorrow and it had to be done by tomorrow and that was it. We had the authority with us to do it. They didn't have to write a letter to Washington to ask somebody to do it if they were working out here. If it was something with reference to a center or the construction of a center, if it cost a number of million dollars nobody had to ask anybody if they could do it or not. If I signed the papers, they could do it and they didn't wait till tomorrow to do it! So things moved, people moved, you know. They were willing to do it and the important thing was that they felt that they were accomplishing something.

The speed with which this thing moved was unbelievable. When you think that we started in March 1942 and two or three weeks later we were established. In November, it was Thanksgiving Day, the last people arrived in centers, 110,000 people. The centers were built, the people were all moved, the centers were equipped, the schools were built, and everything else was finished by that time -- hospitals, everything. Now that's speed. I don't care what lines you take; and it was not easy. It was one of the most difficult things to do. But it had to be -- we had a lot of cooperation from the Army and the Army did a lot staffing it, the Commissary Department furnishing food for the centers.

Then we were able to receive many people who were out of business or who had no jobs. So we could pick up the best commissary men in the country, the best warehousemen in the country, people who had done nothing but good warehousing and they were very capable. I had on my staff in San Francisco, my transportation man was the freight traffic manager for Western Pacific. He was a man who knew the game, you see; I didn't have to run around the bush to find out something. If I wanted something, I told him what I wanted done and that was done! He organized, he knew how to do it. We hired that type of people.

I had this marketing man who had been with the State of California, one of the best marketing men in the United States. Mr. Robinson and he knew his business. We sold produce like





Cozzens: nobody's business, but they wouldn't let us do it. We could have brought WRA out with practically no cost to the government had we been permitted to do that. I think that if we had kept on doing what we were doing, marketing of surplus produce, I think we would have brought back enough money so that WRA would probably have operated at practically no cost to the government. But they didn't want us to do that.

You asked how we were able to get so many people so dedicated. I have been thinking about that. If you remember practically all of our personnel, who had anything to do with anything that was of an important nature, were people between 38 and 50 -- most of them in their 40's, mid-40's at that time. So that we had a group of people that were right at their peak, you know, ready to give everything they had. They'd been through a lot in their lifetime and they were ready to fight; dedicated to do this job.



## II ADMINISTRATION OF THE CENTERS

### Problems of Settling in: the Heating Crisis at Gila, Arizona

Levenson: Why did you and Mrs. Cozzens move down to Gila in the Fall of 42?

Cozzens: I was called down there when Mr. [Eastburn] Smith, our director at Gila, left the job. We lived in an unfinished wing of the hospital. There was no heat. We had three rooms that had no partitions in them, just studs -- no walls. That's where we lived for quite some time. Finally we had a freeze. It went down to sixteen degrees in the morning and stayed at around thirty-one or thirty-two degrees all day long for a week. Babies were turning absolutely blue. I don't know whether Babe [Mrs. Cozzens] realizes just what happened there or not, but the Army told us when we built that camp to use gas heaters.

The camp was designed for gas heaters, and pipes put in. We'd already started to move in. Then they cancelled the order for gas and said we couldn't have it except for cooking and that the Los Angeles industries were going to need it all. So we couldn't have any natural gas for heating. They let us have natural gas for the ranges that had been purchased for the mess halls, but we couldn't use any for heat in the mess halls or any of the apartments. The pipes and everything had already been put in!

We had to use oil heaters and they had to be manufactured. It took us over two months. In the meantime, we let contracts for putting concrete oil tanks in each block and bought hundreds of little gallon cans that each family could have to go get oil from the tanks. We had a hand pump on each tank so they could get a gallon of oil to take home, but we had no heaters.

The Tule Lake center was scheduled originally to burn coal, but heaters were not ready when Tule Lake opened, so there we used tin or hot air stoves. The cast iron stoves or



Cozzens: coal burners arrived at the time of our freeze at Gila, so we had these tin ones left over when the cast iron stoves finally arrived.

So I sent a couple of truck loads of those stoves down to Gila. We put them in the rec halls in each block. We put a couple of stoves in each hall and they used the scrap lumber for fuel. The blocks at Gila were about 375 people. They'd build bonfires outside and they'd get in these rec halls with two little heaters and stand close together in order to get warm. It was a pitiful thing, and it went on for six weeks or about that long. It was just a miserable thing!

I never saw anybody get as upset over that as Babe did! She thought that that was the most terrible thing to happen. There was nothing we could do about it. That was it. They were there and they were still coming -- that was the worst of it. We got the other heaters, our oil heaters, two days before Thanksgiving and we had them in on Thanksgiving Day. We put those in all the apartments. We had 13,000 people there and we put those heaters in and had them operating in two days. So everybody had heat on Thanksgiving.

But that was just one of the little things -- one of the things that wasn't so little at the time -- it was one of the many things that happened.

### Food and Agriculture

Levenson: What sort of agricultural program did you run?

Cozzens: This is something that might be very interesting and of which I am very proud. On the other hand, I was very, very disappointed. We were instructed in the beginning, before Mr. Myer came into the picture, that we must use these people as much as we could. We were supposed to select sites where we could do farming, where we could raise practically all the food that they were to use, and we did.





Cozzens: In the eight Western projects\* (and I'll refer to them that way, away from the two that were in Arkansas\*\*) we had under cultivation, at our peak, about 38,000 acres of agricultural land.

Levenson: That's a tremendous amount.

Cozzens: There were complaints about the people eating pork, eating bacon, eating eggs, eating beef. The Japanese were getting the best of everything, and the public was getting nothing. I got some of the best buyers that I knew or could locate. I bought a lot of Mexican cattle and shipped them to Arizona, because we had large alfalfa fields available there at that time. We fattened them there. We built a slaughterhouse, and we shipped the beef to other centers by refrigerated cars. I sent some good buyers to Iowa and the Midwest, and we bought some excellent pigs, sows, good breed stock, and we established our own pork projects on each center.

We were criticized by the beef industry, so we had to stop the beef project. We had from twenty to thirty thousand laying hens on each project, and chickens that we used for slaughter. We were criticized for our pork project, so we had to shorten those up -- not make them as vast as they were. We started in and raised some excellent produce at Tule Lake, and in Arizona, enough so that we could ship it. I had some excellent agricultural commodity people with me, who I had known when I was in Soil Conservation Service for years. We sold fresh vegetables from Tule Lake and shipped into New York and Chicago markets, and sold in one month up to \$750,000 worth of vegetables, and Congress stopped it.\*\*\*

We shipped it into the open market. We could have shipped from the centers better than a million dollars a month had we had the opportunity. We had to stop that, at Tule Lake, shipping into the open market. We had vegetables in the fields in Arizona that we could have delivered to the Army at no cost. The pressures were so great that we let them rot in the fields. I don't think you'll find this anyplace else.

---

\*Tule Lake, Manzanar (California); Minidoka (Idaho); Topaz (Utah); Poston, Gila (Arizona); Heart Mountain (Wyoming); Amache (Colorado).

\*\*Rohwer, Jerome (Arkansas).

\*\*\*See Appendix A.



Levenson: What sort of food did you serve? Was it American, Japanese or both?

Cozzens: They were able to have Japanese foods. They served Japanese and American foods in the centers. Of course we continued to raise lots and lots of vegetables up to the end of the relocation time, until the centers were closed. All during that time of course the Japanese did all the work on that. It is their type of thing and they had the things that they wanted.

Of course, most of the food came from army headquarters and army warehouses. But in addition to that, rice was one of the big things that came in continually. Everything else was shipped in but it wasn't all army food by any means. It was everything that the Japanese wanted. The warehouse people and the food people, I thought, did a fine job.

#### Industry in the Camps

Cozzens: Gila became the center that made models of the entire Japanese fleet in the Pacific. These models were used by the air corps. These little models were used by the bombers so they could see the ship that they were to bomb. We turned those out literally by the hundreds. They were made by American Japanese citizens. We couldn't use any aliens on them at all. They had to be Japanese-Americans.

We also produced at Gila and at Manzanar a large portion of the camouflage nets that were used in Europe. I think they were all used in the European theater. We shipped them out of Manzanar and out of Gila. We shipped them out of there by the carload -- we made carloads and carloads of camouflage nets.

The people who took part in doing the dirty work, in reference to making camouflage nets, were the Japanese veterans of World War I, the older men because they were American citizens. These men had all received their citizenship because of their World War I service yet the Los Angeles veterans group had kicked them out of the region entirely -- out of their lodge in Los Angeles. So we formed in Gila, while I was there,



Cozzens: a World War I veterans' organization of persons of Japanese ancestry of which I was a charter member. That was the group that gave me lots of support after that, the older men who had been through World War I.

They were citizens and doing the work of cutting the material, the strips of burlap which were dyed and cut to size in order to weave it into the nets. The dye that comes off of that is the most miserable thing! It gets in your hair, you breathe it and you have to wear a gas mask, it is just terrible. But these older men did all that dirty work -- and then the girls and young people did the weaving. We made nets there that were 120 feet long and sixty feet high and sixty feet wide. So those were big nets you know. Then we made hundreds and hundreds of individual nets.

That was a big project for both Manzanar and Gila. But at Gila we got the best support although Manzanar did a lot of work. It seemed this project smoothed out many of the difficulties we had there. After Ralph Merrit came to Manzanar as our director, he was a man who brought peace to anybody, anyplace. He was just a human person, a humane individual and everybody liked Ralph. I think it made a difference where the people felt you were with them or whether they felt you were trying to force them or police them.

The only time I ever showed or tried to show that I was boss was when I thought they were trying to run over me or do something that they shouldn't do. Otherwise we had the most wonderful cooperation from the grandest bunch of people that I ever knew -- when you go back and look at everything that happened.

### The Center Schools

Levenson: You told me earlier that schools were opened. I know that you were very much concerned with education, but of course it depends on what you call a school.

Cozzens: Oh, they were very crude. Don't misunderstand me. Some of them were very, very crude. But we had classes and the kids went to school.





- Cozzens: In Manzanar, I don't know if you've ever been over in that country, the auditorium for Manzanar School is still over there and that is the only thing that stayed on the project. Los Angeles County uses that now. It's a warehouse for their equipment and their maintenance yard for all that deal up in the valley, the Los Angeles Light and Power Company. That was an auditorium that held about four thousand people. So we had a lot of facilities, too. A lot of them were very crude but -- they sat on wooden benches and they did all those kind of things -- but they still went to school.
- Levenson: Did you have anything much to do with the selection of teachers and relationships with the local and state boards of education?
- Cozzens: We had an educational director in Washington and he met with the school boards and what have you and got individual teachers that were available. I did very little except to meet with them and then of course I did meet in the center a number of times with them, just to see that things were going the way I thought they should go, that's all.
- Levenson: Ruth Kingman\* and others have said that, as a result of the experience in the camps, the break in education and the break-up of family control, many kids were seriously dislocated in a variety of ways. They feel that much of the truancy and the appearance of Japanese-Americans in the crime statistics virtually for the first time after World War II could be laid to this experience, particularly the educational experience in the camps. What do you feel about that?
- Cozzens: I wouldn't say that it could be laid to the educational experience in the camps. There is no question that the movement was a dislocation of the family unit. While they lived very close in the camp, the younger kids in the camp had an opportunity to associate with many older people that could have misled them. The undesirable was a leader as a rule, and could cause some very serious difficulties.

But those difficulties never showed up in the centers, shall we say, rather than camps. But while the movement, as Ruth said, was the reason for them entering into crime and

---

\*See interview with Ruth Kingman, this volume.



Cozzens: things of that kind, I don't think that that was due to the schools. Had the schools been better, I don't think that that would have made a bit of difference.

I think where they got into the crime situation was when they relocated in other sections of the country, which they had never had an opportunity to do before the war. They were in the ghetto and they went to school and they came back and they went to Japanese school at night and they never got any chance to go any place else. But when they relocated into another section of the United States and they had a chance to do other things at night rather than go to Japanese school and they became more Americanized. Sure they got into trouble. That's what brought it on; but I don't think you can blame it on the schools in the centers by any means because the majority of education in the center was relatively good. It wasn't the best by any means because we didn't have the best teachers. But many of the kids who graduated from high schools in the centers went on and carried on their work and had no problem. So I think that speaks pretty well for it.

Levenson: Oh, yes. To be fair to Ruth Kingman, she didn't say the center schools caused delinquency. That wasn't what she was saying.

Cozzens: No, I think it was the dislocation caused by the relocation in other parts of the country, and I am still not sure that that was not a good thing rather than a bad thing. Not that it was a good thing that they became delinquent. But I think had we not had this thing happen -- and you can look at it any way you want to -- we would have enormous ghettos of Japanese today! I think that would have been probably far worse than it is today. That's a hard thing to say, one way or the other. Let me back up on that for just a minute. I want to elaborate on that a little more because while I say it is a hard thing to say, just how would it have been I'm not sure. Look at the colored ghettos today. They live by themselves; they are by themselves and they create an enormous problem.

Japanese-Americans were able to relocate in every state of the union except South Carolina or North Carolina -- I don't know which one and due to that they came back to their home or they stayed where they were and they became citizens of that particular spot in the United States and they were



Cozzens: accepted by the people. Had they stayed in the ghetto they would have still had the pressure on them that they had before the war. This way they've mingled with the people, and become part of the community in which they live.

I know one of the girls that was born at Poston. Her father is a clerk in a store in Salinas. Very fine people, citizens. She's the principal of one of the schools in Salinas at the present time, this girl. She got her grammar school training at Poston. So --

Levenson: And today we seem to have a new mayor of San Jose, Norman Mineta.

Cozzens: A fine gentleman, I think. I was very pleased to hear that. I feel it is a very, very fine thing -- both for him and for the Japanese people. I think he'll do a good job. Like he said, we've got a mixture of everybody in San Jose. He says he thinks he was selected because they thought he'd do the best job for everyone. I think that's true.

#### Hospitals and Health Care

Cozzens: The same way with the hospitals. I had nothing to do with the selection of doctors or anything of that kind. But I did have quite a bit to do with the policing of doctors.

Levenson: In what sense do you mean policing?

Cozzens: Well, we had doctors that shouldn't be there and things of that kind. We had to get rid of them, that's all.

Levenson: Were these Caucasian doctors?

Cozzens: Yes, Caucasian doctors.

Levenson: What was the major trouble?

Cozzens: Well, we bumped into people who used narcotics and what have you. So when we found out, we just had to move them, get rid of them, that's all. That only happened three or four times,





Cozzens: but it did happen. I was very much concerned about those types of things because I didn't think that was the place to start it.

### The "Japanese Red Cross" and Visiting Church Groups

Levenson: I have another small question. The Mill Valley Oral History group sends us their interviews. There is one from a lady from Idaho, who visited Minidoka and says that the Japanese Red Cross sent food packages to the relocation camps. Was that so?\*

Cozzens: The Japanese Red Cross?

Levenson: It sounded absolutely astonishing to me!

Cozzens: Oh, I don't think that is true.\*\* I never knew of any food -- they were never short of food in the camps -- never! Nobody ever went hungry. They had good food. They had plenty of it. It wasn't elaborate by any means. It was very plain most times but I've eaten in every center and ate just whatever they had time and again. The only thing that I couldn't go for was when they had raw fish. Other than that, why their food was good. I enjoyed it.

But we had a number of groups and I don't remember this particular group but there were a number of groups of church people who did a lot of good. There were a number of church groups who -- I shouldn't use that term, I shouldn't say a number of church groups, but there were certain groups which were more or less cults rather than a straight denomination, who came into the centers and they were allowed in there. We couldn't keep them out and sometimes they didn't do any good. They felt that these people should put on more pressure to try to get out, to do things against the government, against being there.

Levenson: Are you suggesting they stirred up trouble?

---

\*See Wilson interview in appendix of this volume, page 8.

\*\*But see a Japanese-Canadian account: "The people in Japan, hearing how we have been treated by the Canadian Government, and that we are living in camps in the woods, send us barrels of soya sauce and miso paste." Takashima, A Child in Prison Camp (Tundra Books of Northern New York, 1971).



Cozzens: They came to stir up trouble more than anything else. But now, some of those people when they came would bring food and candy and cakes and what-have-you and this may be the situation here. But as far as the Japanese Red Cross ever sending food to the Japanese here, I've never heard of or seen it.

Levenson: You raised an interesting point just then. You said, "We couldn't keep them out." Well, of course you could have if you wanted to.

Cozzens: We could have but we never did. Yes, I think we could have kept them out, but we never did. We always let them in. Practically anybody who wanted to get into the center to see people had access. We kept no track of what they said; what's the term I want to use? -- their conversations were never taped or recorded or ever scrutinized by any of the people in the center. But sometimes after things weren't so happy after those people left, why from then on we would be particular whether we let them in the next time. Lots of times after that we did have people that went along with them, so that they couldn't just roam the center at will, because we didn't know what was going on.

#### Mrs. Roosevelt's Visit to Gila, Poston and Manzanar

Levenson: You said that one of your happiest trips was when you spent four days with Mrs. Roosevelt in April of 1943.

Cozzens: Yes. Mr. Myer came out from Washington and met me in Phoenix. Philip Glick was with him, our solicitor and Mrs. Roosevelt and Tommy, Mrs. Thompson, her secretary -- who had been her secretary for years and years and later passed away -- was with her and we met her at the Westward Ho Hotel in Phoenix at seven o'clock in the morning. We had breakfast inside and she was ready to go. She had arrived at midnight by train.

We covered Gila that day. I drove the car and if she got in and out of that car once during that day I would guess it to be twenty-five to thirty times. We were in Gila all that day and stayed in Phoenix again that night. We left early the next morning for Poston, Arizona -- she got in and out of that car that day



Cozzens: I'll bet at least fifty or sixty times to see everybody, every place she went. A most enjoyable trip.

Of all the people I have known, she was the most wonderful person I ever talked to.

We went to Poston, were there overnight, stayed in the center. It was hot. Then the next day we went to -- Manzanar -- an all day drive. We were at Manzanar all day and overnight -- two nights in Manzanar and then went on, took her back to Los Angeles. But it was a most interesting trip. The president wanted to know firsthand what was going on and she agreed to make the trip to tell him about it. And she surely saw the centers!

Levenson: What was she most interested in?

Cozzens: I just couldn't say. She was interested in everything! She even wanted to see how the families were living, she wanted to see what they were eating, she wanted to see the farms, she wanted to see what they were raising -- she wanted to see everything that was going on in the centers. She saw where they were making camouflage nets, she saw where they were making those little models for the navy at that time. She went through the schools. I don't know of anyplace that she didn't go. We didn't miss a thing. I saw a lot of things that day I didn't know were there myself.

Levenson: [Laughing] Like what?

Cozzens: Oh, I don't know offhand, but you know what I mean -- a lot of times I wouldn't stop to go into a house and she did. So I went too, so I could see for myself. But I hadn't visited many of them. I'd been in a few of the houses but she went into lots of them. She went where the women were having sewing clubs and they were having little private meetings, block meetings and things of that kind that I never had attended before -- because I didn't have time to do it.





### III PRESSURES FROM ALL SIDES

#### Troubles in the Centers: Gila

Levenson: Can you tell me how you handled the situation at Gila when you were acting director of that center?

Cozzens: I went to Gila, Arizona shortly after the Manzanar trouble. [Early 1943] There was quite a bit of unrest down there. Our manager practically had a nervous breakdown -- it became too much for him and he had to leave. So Mr. Myer asked me to go and we were down there for about two months. It was during that period that a similar type of thing that happened at Manzanar started to happen at Gila. One of the boys who had been in charge of supplies for the Army at the Visalia Assembly Center was very severely beaten up by a group of young Japanese boys who wanted to get back at him because they thought he had given his friends more food and more clothes than the average person got from the Army and therefore they were very much upset about it. So they had beaten this boy up.

I don't think at that time that that was the reason for it. He was a Kibei. He later went with military intelligence. I'm not sure that he hadn't done some informing prior to this time. I never knew because I was not in contact with military intelligence about this particular thing.

But both camps at Gila were very much upset when we got there. The beating had taken place the day the other director left. Mrs. Cozzens and I got there the following day, and things were very much in an uproar. They thought there was going to be a sort of riot action take place. I got hold of some of the leaders in Camp #2 where the trouble had happened.

We called a mass meeting that night and everybody told me that Mrs. Cozzens and I should never go over there, that we were going to get beaten up if we went over there. I took



Cozzens: Mrs. Cozzens with me. We went to the camp and I had, I guess, close to a hundred young Japanese boys who, unbeknown to us were lined up in about three rows on each side of us as we walked to the meeting -- it was done very nicely. The leaders of the camp wanted to see peace restored. There were about five thousand people and I talked to them in this big sort of paradeground deal that we had. The corridor of Japanese on each side of us protected us all the way over to the stage and all the way back to our car. We had no trouble, nothing happened. We informed the group there that if they were looking for trouble, they could have it. But at the first outbreak of anything again, I don't care who got beat up or anything again, I was going to treat it just as severely as I could possible do under the law, and if I couldn't do it, I'd get the Army to do it. I wasn't going to stand for any more rough stuff at all.

We never had one thing happen in the center after that, the entire time we were there. So I think the trouble at Manzanar was a similar type of thing. It could have been avoided. I don't think the trouble needed to have happened. Manzanar -- that's one of those things. It's gone by -- everybody was upset at the time. Everybody was high-tensioned.

Levenson: At Gila, you apparently had the active cooperation of Japanese leaders in the camp?

Cozzens: I had it everyplace we went, every camp we worked in we had it. There are always a few in a camp that are hostile, but it was over little things. It was over things that had very little to do with management, things that had to do with their personal feelings. Like the things of today -- "If the war was over we wouldn't have any trouble in the colleges." Well, that's a lot of hooey, you know. It is the same kind of thing. One mess hall didn't get the same type of food that somebody else got -- that sort of thing. Our trouble in the centers was not bad at all.

#### Trouble at Tule Lake

Cozzens: Our trouble at Tule Lake [November 1943] was brought on by a driver, a young kid driving a truck, who turned the truck over on the way from the center to the farming area, and



Cozzens: killed -- I don't know -- two or three boys. They wanted -- the center wanted to have a great demonstration before the funeral. We had about thirteen thousand people there, and many of those that were there, about three thousand, wanted to go back to Japan. The center director and myself decided it was not the thing to do, we didn't know where it would end. So, with that refusal, a bunch of young hoodlums so to speak, probably fifty -- not more than that -- beat up a number of our police officers. (Mr. Myer and I had been to the center the day before; I went back to Berkeley and Mr. Myer went East.) The next night they put on this show. They beat up our police officers. We only had thirteen up there at the time. They were subdued by the thirteen. They were going to beat up the manager and what have you, and because of that -- he had his family there -- he called in the Army. It was under Army guard then for -- I guess close to a month.

Our agreement with the military was very carefully written out at the time the sites were established, and it told us how to get the Army into the center, but it didn't tell us how to get them out! We had at the center at that time only eight or ten internal guards left, civilian guards. The military had a thousand men at Tule Lake. After we called them, it took nearly two hours to get there, and then they were in, and they were in control of the center. Our civilian people worked for them, but continued to run the center. They just policed it. Then -- after about a month or three weeks (I don't know the exact time, unless I went back and we got the documents and we checked it) Mr. Myer was on the phone one day, together with General [Omar] Bradley and he said, "Bob, how soon can you take over Tule Lake?" I said, "Well, as soon as I can recruit another ten or fifteen more men." I wanted to have at least thirty. I said, "You still have a thousand men there, General, and we'd like to have at least thirty guards. We think we can run it with thirty guards." He said, "You're going to have to take it over tomorrow afternoon, because we will have to move out. We want to be able to say that we have no camps where Japanese are confined that are under military control on account of the prisoner of war camps in the Far East."

So the next afternoon, we took over. But while we had to still use some military guards inside the centers, they were under our director's instructions and we called for how





Cozzens: many we needed every day. And if you don't think that was quite a little problem! But it worked, and from then on there were no military guards in the center. But that was an experience that few people have ever lived through if you've dealt with the military.

Tule Lake was not a disagreeable place from then on. We separated the people who wanted to go back to Japan, and we arranged for their transportation back to Japan. Their crops were at a peak at that time. The local people refused to harvest and we brought some young boys, about six hundred of them from one of the camps at [Minidoka] Idaho. We set up a separate tent camp outside of the center. They did all the harvesting of the crop we had left. We had plenty of places to store it, like the potatoes and rutabagas, and cabbage, and things of that kind that we could keep in storage, and we shipped those crops also to the other centers. Of course, we were close to the end of the war and from then on we had very little difficulty. That's the only difficulty we had, and most of it was blown up on the front pages of the paper, rather than what actually happened.

Of course Tule Lake was different from other camps. There was a problem with those people who wanted to be Japanese. The sad part of it was that out of about, roughly, five thousand who wanted to go back to Japan, I think there were only twelve or fifteen hundred of the older people and they took all the women and children with them. The kids didn't want to go. So that the number of people that wanted to be Japanese was very, very small. The reason some of the older people wanted to be Japanese was that they had been here and worked here for years and years and years and then lost everything they had and they saw no chance of ever recovering at that time. They were still locked up. They didn't know what was going to happen. They couldn't see beyond that point, at that time. So that's about all I have on that.



### The Press and Tule Lake

Cozzens: When the news broke of the problem at Tule Lake -- and if you read Mr. Myer's book with reference to the problem at Tule Lake where he mentions that he and I were there -- you'll find that the things that led up to that meeting are exactly as described in that book. There was no more fanfare to it, nothing else existed at all except that.\*

The reason for the showing that day of the big group that came to the meeting was because someone in the camp had told them Mr. Myer wanted to see them. They didn't intend to cause any trouble because they had their women and kids with them.

Levenson: You are speaking of the Japanese in the camp?

Cozzens: Yes, the Japanese in the camp. They brought their whole family along. Somebody had told them to come who wanted to cause the trouble and said that Mr. Myer had requested it. We never did find out who did that. That was not in the deal. But the families came and we had a very, very fine meeting. Mr. Myer gave a nice talk to them and what have you. In the meantime, a number of the government people were not let out of the building but I went back and forth between the other buildings during the time the meeting was going on to see what was happening. I went through the crowd three or four times during all the time the meeting was going on and nobody bothered me.

Mr. Myer and I left there and before we left or about the time we were ready to leave the telephone started to ring from San Francisco -- somebody had got wind of it -- the news reporters in Tule Lake or somebody got wind of it and found out that there was a riot out there. Well, at that time there was no riot. There was nothing but a meeting. So I told my man in San Francisco that. I got him on the phone and he said they were after him to find out what's happening in the riot at Tule Lake. I said, "There is no riot. We had a meeting and there was absolutely nobody hurt."

---

\*Myer, Dillon S. Uprooted Americans: The Japanese-Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971).



Cozzens: "Well, people have been told they can't move and what have you."

I said, "Up to this particular moment, I know that that isn't true, because I went back and forth between all the administration buildings with no trouble." We had three buildings up there, administrative buildings -- and I was back and forth between the buildings and then after the meeting, Mr. Myer and I were over in Ray Best's house, which was close to the buildings.

So we left there that evening and that night, a group of young kids who wanted to raise a little thunder as they were sore at Mr. Best because he would not let them have a big demonstration, tried to get to him but were stopped by our guards, but Mr. Best called in the Army.

So we had the crop which was then ready to be harvested and in the interim before Mr. Myer had got there and before we had this meeting of these people, we had to harvest this crop which was in the field and it had to be harvested. So we brought a bunch of young Japanese boys by train from the Minidoka project in Idaho to Tule Lake and we set up a big army camp deal out on the farm. Well, in order to feed those boys we took some food out of the warehouses and this group, who the night after the meeting tried to attack Mr. Best, they attacked the quarters there -- claimed that they were doing it because they were taking their food away from them.

There was plenty of food in the warehouse for everybody. We weren't going to take any food away from anybody. All we were doing was putting more food in the warehouse, because we had big cold storage places there for food and produce and everything. That was the time when Mr. Best had to call the Army in to take over.

Then the press took after us at that time because they claimed that we knew this was going to happen. But we didn't know it was going to happen. We had no idea it was going to happen. Following that I took a group of reporters in a private car to Tule Lake and I let them live any place they wanted to. They could live in the center, they could sleep in the Japanese quarters if they had rooms for them, they could go wherever they wanted to and roam.





- Cozzens: When they came back and wrote their articles there were three or four of those reporters who lost their jobs or quit because they didn't write the article the way the newspaper people wanted them to write it. Pat Frayne\* can tell us who those were and what the story was on that because that's just as true as I'm sitting here that that thing happened. We had some good articles come out of it and we had some that were just as black as could be and what they said was absolutely untrue! So it was -- the pressures were so great from the people who owned the papers or handled the policy that there wasn't much you could do about it.
- Levenson: Oh yes. I can see that you were in a tremendous bind!
- Cozzens: Yes, but it was a lot of fun.

#### Congressional Committees and the WRA

- Levenson: What was your experience with Congressional Committees?
- Cozzens: We were investigated more than any other agency in Washington during the war because everybody was after us, everybody was after us. Anybody could make political history out of getting somebody in WRA in trouble or see if they could do away with the agency. If they could have broken up the agency, they might have kept the Japanese out.
- Levenson: You mean kept them locked up?
- Cozzens: Kept them locked up, kept them from coming back. They never wanted them to return to California.
- Levenson: So you're suggesting that it was West Coast pressure?
- Cozzens: That's right, it was pressure from all over.
- Levenson: From all over the country?
- Cozzens: Not only western. It was people who thought it was good politically and they could make history by using it, using the Japanese as a tool.

---

\*See Chapter V.



Levenson: Would you say it was predominantly West and South?

Cozzens: Well, it was promoted from the West, all right. But when you take the Dies Committee who did everything they could to break up the whole deal, and they did it without any rhyme or reason. They took the final licking themselves, because everything they said was not true! Why should they take after us? They should have been investigating us for the purpose of finding out what good we were doing, not what they could do to wreck us. That is all [Congressman Martin] Dies tried to do, to wreck us. He wrecked himself by doing it. He never won his election. He couldn't go back. It was just because the things that they took after us for were not true.

Who was our friend from Red Bluff, who was congressman from up there, who later became senator? Clair Engle. Clair Engle was a very good friend of mine. But at the height of this thing, at the beginning of the war -- rather in the middle of it, after a year and a half of it, I had a nervous breakdown. I'd been laying there for three days and hadn't listened to anything and asked the doctor if I couldn't listen to the radio and he said, "Yes, but don't listen to anything that is going to upset you." I turned the radio on, why the first thing that came on was a statement that Congressman Engle today made a statement on the floor of Congress that Dillon Myer, along with Bob Cozzens, ought to be deported to Japan with all the rest of the Japanese.

Now if that has anything to do with good business or good judgement, then I'm crazy! Those kinds of statements went on continually. That thing just went on and on and on because they hoped to build -- the only possible reason he could have said that was to try to wreck the agency to get us out of the way because he couldn't kick us around, that's all. The other thing was that most of us with the agency -- Dillon Myer feared nobody and I didn't have to stay there but I feared nobody as far as the work was concerned. We had a job to do and we made up our minds that we were going to do it! I think that that's the thing that put it over.



Pressures on the Cozzens Family

Levenson: I'm sorry, I don't want to talk about it if it upsets you, but you didn't mention to me that you'd had a nervous breakdown.

Cozzens: Well, there were two things. Right at the time, the pressures were terrible. The phone would ring all night. That is, it would ring fifteen or twenty times during the evening if I was home or if I wasn't. They'd say to my wife, "Are you the wife of that Jap-loving so-and-so?" and if I was home they would take after me for something. Our daughter was at the point at that time that we didn't know whether she would be with us another day or two or not. She called me and I got up to go to her. When I went to her to stop her hemorrhaging -- I started to work on her I fell on the floor, I got up got everything stopped but when I got on my feet, the whole walls and everything had turned over. The house was just -- that way, you know -- when I walked I was walking on the side of the building [demonstrating] and the building was up here I felt.

So I got to bed and the next day we got the doctor and he said -- he thought I had a slight heart attack, but I don't think I did. I think I was just about shot. On the other hand, for about three or four weeks or more, I was not able to put things together. I'd put them on the dictaphone and then listen to them -- they didn't come out the way I said them. But I went back to work in about three weeks. I wasn't able to carry a full load for about six weeks. It was one of those things. It happened. Of course in the meantime we had lost a daughter. But it all happened over that period.

So then the night that that happened why, the reporters called me about midnight or something, just after I had gotten home from the hospital after our daughter died, and about midnight the phone rang, and I got one of those sorts of calls, a very nasty one, and I lost all control. I called the guy everything I could think of and told him about our daughter, and what a heel I thought he was. You know we never had any calls after that? It was just a needling situation they did every day, every day you know. They needled me at the wrong time.





Levenson: You said reporters?

Cozzens: Well, a lot of these people were reporters that called me. A lot of the people were press people who called me at home. They needed you for the press. You couldn't tell who they were.

Levenson: Would they identify themselves?

Cozzens: Many of them would but many of them wouldn't, no. But it was just continuous harassing that went on. My two daughters were blackballed in sororities at the University of California because of it. I would walk down the street and have people that I'd gone to parties with and known all my life. They'd see me coming in these small towns and they'd cross the street in the middle of the block so they could avoid talking to me, because I'd take after them, you know and stand up for the Japanese. So it was quite an experience as far as that's concerned.

Levenson: What a dreadful situation, Mr. Cozzens.

Cozzens: What I mean is, things were so tied together, that they knew enough to leave us alone. Don't you see what I mean? It goes deeper than just one individual, or two, don't you see? It's one of those things that goes on and on.

Levenson: Do you have any suspicions as to who was behind the calls?

Cozzens: Not particularly. Not to tie it to individuals.

Levenson: Yes, but what groups?

Cozzens: The groups that were opposed to the Japanese coming back, that's all. Just those who were opposed to see them come back. Market people. Could be labor unions. I don't want to say that. I don't know. But it could be, because these people were not people that joined unions. I don't know that that was true. But it was a most serious thing for me, and for our family. It was sort of a nightmare through the years. You know what goes on in Berkeley now. You can imagine what went on during that time. People were just being harassed -- just a continuous thing, and it seemed to happen more when I was out of town than when I was home. So somebody knew when I was gone.



#### IV RESETTLEMENT AND RETURN

##### Nisei Volunteers and the 442nd

- Levenson: What part did you play when the Nisei were allowed to volunteer for the Army again?
- Cozzens: In early '43 I held meetings in all the centers -- when they opened up enlistment for the Japanese -- to try to convince them that this was the thing to do. It was rather difficult and they would sit and look at me for ten, fifteen minutes at a time and not say a word. They would ask the most embarrassing questions -- most difficult to answer.
- Levenson: Like what?
- Cozzens: "You've got my mother and father and my sister and brother locked up here and guarded by the Army. Why should I go fight?"
- Levenson: How did you answer that?
- Cozzens: Well, the only way I could answer was that the government felt that the evacuation was made for the protection of the Japanese-Americans and not for anything against them.

If they hadn't been evacuated from the coast I think we would have had some very serious actions against them by different people similar to the things that happened when they came home. From the beginning I felt that the evacuation was not necessary. I still feel that it was not necessary. It was a very difficult thing to answer.

On the other hand, I do feel that the economic opportunists would have done anything as far as they could to get rid of them and get them off the land. That was the reason -- that was 90% of the reason they were evacuated. Regardless of what anybody thinks, I still am convinced that that is true. It was a most difficult thing. But after every meeting we had quite a few enlistments.



Cozzens:

I thought that one of the most impressive things -- I went over to visit this family who had worked for us for twelve years in Watsonville. The two boys were there and they said, "The government has asked us to enlist." And why should they enlist in view -- their mother and father were locked up and their sister was locked up? Their father was a little bit of a Japanese man who had been in this country almost all his life but was not able to become a citizen. But a number of years before the war he came to me and said, "Mr. Cozzens, today I am just as much citizen as I can be." I said, "What do you mean, Mori?"

"Well," he said, "You know my wife's sister has been in Japan all these years but she died. All these years we've been sending money to Japan and in order to make it easy to send money to Japan we've been keeping our money, what little bit we had, in the Yokohama Specie Bank in San Francisco. But Yoshi's sister died, so we take all the money out of Yokohama Specie Bank and we move to Watsonville and we put in Pajaro Valley National Bank. Now," he says, "I'm just as much American I can be." This was seven or eight years prior to the war, or something like that. I've always gotten a great kick out of that.

Well, he was at this meeting, when I went over there with the boys. He said to me, "Do you think the boys should enlist in the Army?"

"Yes," I said, "I think they should. This is their country and it is going to turn out all right for them in the end. I think that they should do this, what all the rest have done. I served in the Navy and other people are serving in the Army; why should they not serve in the Army?"

He says, "The government wants them to serve in the Army?"

I said, "Yes, they do."

So he turns around to the boys, he says, "Roy and Harry --" He said something first to his wife in Japanese; she nodded her head. Then he said, "Roy and Harry, the United States Government says you should serve in the Army. Mr. Cozzens says you should serve in the Army and if you don't serve in the





- Cozzens: Army, Yoshi and I will disown you." Which I thought was quite an interesting remark.
- Levenson: What happened then? What did the boys do?
- Cozzens: They both enlisted. One of them never went. That is, he went in the Army, but the Army never kept him. I don't think he was a good soldier because he later on went to Japan. The other son became an accountant and he, last I knew, was doing accounting work for the Standard Oil Company in the Southern States.
- Levenson: How long was the talk that you'd give?
- Cozzens: It would last about an hour, each one.
- Levenson: I am interested why you spoke rather than an army officer or a representative of the War Department.
- Cozzens: I don't think it would have gone over very well from the Army point of view. I was closer to the Japanese than anybody in the Army was.
- Levenson: I'm sure that's true, but I wonder how you won that sort of confidence?
- Cozzens: Well, I don't know except that the Japanese had known me for a number of years, and trusted me.

Earl Warren and Resettlement: Attitude Change

- Levenson: What sorts of contacts did you have with Earl Warren?
- Cozzens: Governor Warren made very drastic statements against WRA and everybody in it. At the time he made these statements I became very much upset over it and very concerned about it, because the statements were absolutely not true. I felt at the time that the governor was very definitely opposed to ever bringing the Japanese back or having anything to do with them. I am sure that that was his feeling. This was close to the end of the evacuation. We had already started to move people back.



Levenson: In November, December of '44?

Cozzens: Somewhere along in there. Through my public relations officer Pat Frayne and the governor's secretary -- I don't remember his name -- we were able to contact the governor and we had some very bitter remarks over the telephone.

Levenson: On what subjects?

Cozzens: On the subject of his criticism of WRA and his criticism of the Japanese people as a whole.

Through this, due to our contact with him by phone and with his secretary, an appointment was made for the governor, myself and my public relations officer Pat Frayne to meet in Sacramento. We went to lunch at 11 o'clock and we left the luncheon meeting at about 5:30 that evening.

Shortly thereafter -- I don't know if it was the next day or two or three days afterwards -- the governor made a very favorable statement in a newspaper. At that time I arranged an appointment for him and Mr. Myer. Mr. Myer came out and a picture appeared in the paper of the governor shaking hands with Mr. Myer. From that time on the governor was a great help to us in working out many of the problems in California.

Levenson: What do you think was the turning point of that meeting? It was, after all, an abrupt change that Warren made. As you once said, when the decision was made to bring the Japanese back, Warren was fair.

Cozzens: I don't think that Governor Warren was the liberal person which he is today. I believe that he, at that time, was on the bandwagon with practically every other politician who was using the Japanese evacuation to build up their own political influence because they felt that was the thing to do. I am sure he realized at that meeting that all the houses of cards in Washington would be tumbling down in California if there wasn't some change made, because we made it very plain exactly what we intended to do. I don't think he understood the WRA program up to that point. I think he was terribly misinformed.

Levenson: What were his misconceptions?



Cozzens: Well, he felt that we were do-gooders and that we had nothing at heart except just to build our own castles, probably, by being do-gooders rather than to take care of the people, as such. I don't think that there was anybody in WRA that tried to build a future or a castle at the expense of the Japanese in any way whatsoever. Because we knew we were going to be out of a job when the war was over and the only thing we could do was to bring these people back and to have them back in the stream of human relations in the state in as good a condition as possible. That was our job; that was the job we had to do.

I don't think he realized that that group was ready to fight as hard as they would fight. I don't think he realized that WRA had the backing of Washington as well as we had. The president was thoroughly in back of Myer. Mr. Ickes was then Secretary of the Interior, of course, and Mr. Ickes backed us to the limit in everything we wanted to do and he insisted that everyone of the people in the Interior Department did the same thing. He was wonderful to work with as long as we kept him advised of what was going on.

I think the change came at our luncheon meeting with Warren. I don't remember the full discussion that day -- it went on for about six hours or more and it wasn't all a bed of roses as I remember. But we came out of there feeling that the governor was our friend. We came out of there feeling that the governor was ready to start in to help us.

But when we started bringing people back, the pressures were still so great that we had a lot of problems like the shootings in the San Joaquin Valley. And while I spent considerable time with the attorney general down there investigating those things, we still had judges that didn't do a thing if they caught somebody with a gun shooting through a Japanese house. He was excused or put on probation, which to me was absolutely wrong. I think it was just as wrong as the thing we are doing today, letting those people who are radicals, who tear up our public institutions and everything else and get away with it! I just don't think we can live in a country like that!

Had we not -- the WRA -- not fought for the Japanese people and insisted that something be done to protect them, the Japanese would never had had the peaceful return they had.





Levenson: I'd like to go back to the meeting. One of the things that's said is that Governor Warren was a law and order man. His whole background was in that, and when the Army said the Japanese should be moved out, he was very much in support. When the federal government said they should move back to California, he came out and said that now the law is that the Japanese shall have order. But, it seems to me, that you and Mr. Frayne were the catalysts who caused this change, and I'd like to know what combination of the carrot and the stick you used? [Laughs]

Cozzens: Well, I feel that the governor, as I have stated, while he was for law and order, the evacuation at that time was the popular thing to do. Even till today -- I know the governor pretty well and he doesn't let anything go unturned that will be a popular move. I think that was true at that time. I think he would agree to go along with what the federal government insisted on doing. But at that time when we first started talking about moving people back, he wasn't sure that that was the thing to do. I don't think that he realized that it was going to happen. At that time I don't think he felt that that was going to happen. I think that after our discussion for some five hours -- four and a half or five hours or so, whether we had anything to do with convincing the governor or not, I can't say that we did, except that we left there in a friendly attitude.

When we went in there I was in a belligerent attitude, I'll tell you that -- and so was he. As I say, shortly afterwards why, he came out and made some very good statements, saying that the people were going to be returned and that we should do everything we could to carry it on.

I wish I could give you more exact statements about the things we discussed -- but it was just a general discussion of why they should come back, a general discussion of who they were, that they were citizens, that we were going to protect that regardless of what happened! It didn't make any difference whether he liked it or not, they were coming back. That was it. If we had to fight, we'd have to fight, but we didn't want to fight.

Levenson: And by "fight" what did you mean?



- Cozzens: Well, I think that we would have used everything at our disposal. The federal government has lots of things at their disposal! [Laughter]
- Levenson: What do you think were the roots of Earl Warren's feelings about the Japanese? Of course he's a Californian, brought up in Bakersfield --
- Cozzens: I don't know his exact feeling toward Japanese people but -- and I don't know whether he had a part in the writing of the law that prevented them from becoming citizens of the United States or not. But of course he supported that because he was a district attorney for years and also as governor he supported it. But none of that gave people in the state government the right -- because of the war -- to take away all the licenses that these people had that were in business, like liquor licenses. They just rescinded them. They were worth lots of money. But they rescinded them. They resold them for lots of money -- which was wrong, absolutely wrong. Those things have never been corrected. But that was all during his administration.

Now when those things go on -- sure, he couldn't watch everything that went on, I admit that -- but just the same they were pilfered by their friends, by their enemies and by everybody that they could be pilfered by all during the war. It was pitiful, the things that happened to them. Whatever they get will never be enough as far as I'm concerned. I just feel that the pilfering that went on where their goods were stored -- they stored them in churches and they trusted people who were their friends. Their friends in many cases robbed them of everything that they had during the war.

#### Problems with Beck and the Teamsters

- Levenson: Can you tell me about the troubles that some of the Japanese-American growers and shippers had in reestablishing their businesses?
- Cozzens: In Seattle, when the Japanese came back, [David] Beck, who went to jail afterwards -- a Teamster labor leader in the Northwest -- stopped the Japanese from bringing their produce



Cozzens: to the market. They came to the market and the Teamsters wouldn't haul it out of the market if it were sold. Although he let them deliver to a site where nobody saw them pick it up in the field, and then they hauled it to the market. As long as they didn't know it was Japanese produce and they got their cut out of it, it was perfectly OK. That's the type of thing that went on continually.

Mr. Myer threatened to bring the Army in in the Northwest, in order to stop this thing -- having produce dumped in the streets, and things of that kind. After the war was over. I was in the thick of that up there a number of times, in Seattle and Portland. It was just no good. It was just terrible.

Levenson: Did you ever solve it?

Cozzens: They finally called the people off, because I think they believed Mr. Myer would have brought the Army in, and I think the President would have gone along with it.

In California, we never had anything quite that bad. They never fought them after they came back, but they did everything they could to try to keep them from coming back.

Well, this is some of the things that happened in Oregon when the Teamsters stopped them selling produce in the market up there. This was near Kent, Oregon. [Reading from diary] 'Worried about sweet corn. He had 1 1/2 acres of tomatoes and they spoiled on him. The corn was about two weeks off. Tomatoes, he lost all but about a quarter of an acre. The Yabukis said not to ship any more cucumbers by common carrier. Told by Smith [WRA advisor] to stay home and not to deliver any himself. The Teamsters men were making it hot. Stop deliveries until things quiet down.' This was the kind of thing that happened up there in Kent, Washington, right after the war.

Levenson: And the point about the Yabuki story is, I suppose, that Beck's Teamsters wouldn't move his stuff.

Cozzens: They wouldn't move his stuff. The Teamsters were making it hot. To stop deliveries until things quieted down.





Levenson: So how was Yabuki supposed to live?

Cozzens: They didn't care.

Levenson: I am interested in your agent's advice. I realize he had a split obligation. He had an obligation to protect Yabuki's life but he was also interested in Yabuki making a living, I am quite sure.

Cozzens: Well, what we finally did, of course, we did a lot of things, all sorts of crazy things, we hired Caucasians who were favorable to the Japanese to pick up the vegetables and deliver them in their own trucks and sell them and return the money to the Japanese. We did that in many cases. We finally got so that we threatened the Teamsters in Portland and it was a nasty fight up there for some time. The Japanese really suffered up there.

I notice here that they say, "The florists have also refused to buy flowers from the market." So that they had to stop shipping the flowers to the market. So they evidently got over a lot of this by employing private trucks who would pick these up and bring them from their own farms and then turn them over to the Teamsters and they'd finally handle them -- because the Teamsters, a lot of the boys were not opposed to this themselves except for the pressure from the top.

This is very interesting. Toshio Sakota finally came back to 1110 First Avenue in Seattle and opened a restaurant. A mother and father and the wife. I dropped in to see him. He said business was excellent. He didn't have any trouble. "People start talking and the customers throw them out." That was some of the reactions.

Then many of these people worked on the railroads in the Northwest prior to the evacuation. After the war, why Union Pacific and Northern Pacific and Great Northern refused to take them. But the Southern Pacific finally wanted them in the Cascade area and we recruited quite a few who went to work for Southern Pacific in section crews after that.

Levenson: Is there anything you can say about why Southern Pacific behaved well and the other railroads did not?



- Cozzens: No. Southern Pacific had not worked many of them till that time.
- Levenson: So would you agree with this, that where you had organized opposition, whether it was union or a group of Legionnaires or what have you, you had troubles. But where they were free to make their contact directly with individuals things went smoothly? Is that a reasonable summing up?
- Cozzens: That's generally true.

#### Terrorist Incidents and Intimidation of Japanese-Americans

- Cozzens: There are a few incidents that happened in California that are quite interesting. When we started to bring people back, we had a number of very, very hot spots. Down in the San Joaquin Valley were a number of them. One area was close to Orossi. They shot through Japanese houses there a number of times. One we visited shortly after it happened, and they shot through the wall, and it went through the wall and through a baby's crib and came out the other side. It missed the mark where the baby's head was by about two inches. The State Attorney General was down there with me. We went over a number of things. They got suspects and brought them in, and even had the gun, and nothing was done about it.

This thing became so bad, that one of the bankers down there had been telling these people not to come back. His group of Japanese farms that he was managing, small farms, it was very dangerous for the farmers to come back. One place in particular -- the family had told me that they had been able to make money on that place every year -- the banker couldn't make any money! They'd been losing money ever since they'd been in the center. The place had never made any money.

A gentleman by the name of ["Dutch," Hubert B.] Leonard, who was one of the world's great baseball pitchers had a place down there, and was a great man. He was quite a guy. He said, "If you let me manage this Japanese place, I'll put some money in the bank every year." We turned this one place over to him to manage; it was in grapes. He had this



Cozzens: big cold storage plant of his where he could take care of them and ship them so he could get the eastern markets for Thanksgiving and Christmas. He managed this place, and during the two years he had it he put over twenty thousand dollars into the bank for the Japanese owners. The other people came home to nothing.

I was suspicious about the deal, because we had cased this bank, and we found that if they had a meeting there of local people about four o'clock in the afternoon, then that night they had a raid on Japanese homes. I couldn't stop it. I didn't know how to stop it. We tried everything in the world, but finally the Internal Revenue Agent requested this particular banker to bring all the reports of these Japanese farms, and come to San Francisco, because they wanted to check all of the accounting on these farms over the period of years the Japanese had been away, and check his returns that he'd shown.

The day before he was supposed to be in San Francisco, he had a heart attack and died, and we didn't have one raid after that! I don't know that he did it. But it never happened again.

Late in 1945, I made a trip to Oregon and Washington. In Auburn, Washington, we went in to check the property of people who had left everything stored there. It was next door to a laundry and the people in the laundry were supposed to look after it. But people had been permitted to get in there or had broken in. We could see no place where they got in except with keys. The girls' clothes -- dress uniforms and party dresses and formals -- were taken and hung and slit with razor blades top to bottom. The ashes of the deceased -- and they had many urns there -- were poured all over everything. All the furniture that was stored in there was slit with knife blades or razor blades across the chairs and up and down the backs. The vandalism was unbelievable.

I talked there that night to a group of about two thousand people in the high school auditorium. There was one person there who had returned, had been in the Navy -- a Navy commander and he talked about "Once a Japanese, always a Jap and you couldn't trust any of them." When I





Cozzens: got on the program, I thought they were going to mob me. And if it hadn't been for a couple of people who had control of the crowd -- they would have. They asked questions -- such questions as, "In what theatre of operations were the American-Japanese helping out?" I said, "If you know enough to ask that question, you know enough to know that I can't answer it." With that they started the booing and the thing became just an enormous deal, you know. The whole group started to move.

Then following that, the person from the Navy spoke again. He said that it was obvious that there were not only starry-eyed people in the federal government such as Mr. Cozzens whom he referred to but there were also starry-eyed people in the Army. But "Once a Jap, always a Jap."

So with that, next morning I talked to Mr. Myer by phone and through Mr. Ickes and through the Navy Department, we were able to get this naval officer to cease talking because he had returned from the war, and he'd been in the hospital out there and was not mentally well. Of course he was still carrying his feeling from being torpedoed and sunk and what have you, which I can understand. But he should never have been permitted to talk on that kind of a subject because it was just anything to stir up trouble. That was the way it was.

Levenson: Who kept control of the crowd?

Cozzens: I don't know. There were a couple of local citizens who stood up immediately, right in front of the crowd, at the bottom of the stage. We were on the stage in this high school, and they stood up there and yelled for everybody to sit down, that it was all right, that these people were here and that we should listen to both sides. One guy got the mike. He jumped up on the stage and grabbed the mike and told them to stop. I don't remember who it was but he did a very beautiful job!

Levenson: But you really thought you were going to be mobbed?

Cozzens: Oh, I thought we were going to be mobbed. It was one of those things. I didn't move. I wasn't going to run -- if you start to move, then you are in trouble.



Incidents at Hood River, Oregon

- Levenson: Were you with Mr. Myer when he went up to Hood River [December, 1945] to talk to the people there?
- Cozzens: Yes, I was supposed to talk to them that same day, but I got carsick on the way up, didn't make it to the meeting! I'd been there before.
- Levenson: I wonder why that was such a virulent place?
- Cozzens: It is a difficult thing to explain. Hood River was a small community at that time and there was a very selfish individual who was commander of the [American] Legion. However, all these boys had been in the service. Out there in the park there was a big memorial set up to them. The Legion took action and this individual, [Commander Jess] Edington, was evidently powerful enough to get them to go along with him and remove the names of Japanese-American servicemen from that plaque. I thought this was one of the most terrible things which could happen to anybody.\*
- Levenson: It is a curious thing to have such violent prejudice in a small community where the Japanese must have been known as individuals. How do you account for it?
- Cozzens: The thing that undoubtedly had some effect is the statement similar to one at the meeting that I attended in San Francisco just prior to the war and just prior to the evacuation, when one of the farmers -- and a very prominent farmer from the Salinas Valley said to General DeWitt, "Oh, move them all out! Anybody can make money on carrots at forty cents a bunch!" And I think that was the feeling at Hood River.

The Japanese were in the apple business and they were making money. This was a chance to get them out and they would probably make more money if the Japanese did get out. That was their feeling. It was economic -- the economic opportunists -- I wish I could call them by their right name, but it wouldn't look good in print!

---

\*See Appendix C



Cozzens: Those were the people who were at the base of this evacuation in the beginning and they were the ones that put on the big drive never to let them come back. At that time the movement against the Japanese was terribly high -- in December, 1945.

The Hood River thing was exploited in another way. That was by boycott, similar to the one Cesar Chavez uses now. In Hood River, they took down the names of three Japanese-American boys who were in the service. One or two had already died for their country in the war. They took their names off the World War II roll of honor that was posted in the Hood River Civic Center. Of course, they had evacuated all the Japanese there and were going to seize their farms, or had seized them and added injury to the insult. Dillon Myer instituted a threatened boycott on Hood River apples. We had people in Cleveland, Akron, New York, sympathetic to justice go in the grocery stores and say "You sell Hood River apples here?" They'd say, "Yes." They'd say, "Well, we're not going to trade here anymore." This was piped back from the Eastern office to the Western office.

It got to a banker in Portland, Oregon, who was lending them money on their upcoming crops. He called those Hood River applegrowers in and said, "I'm sorry, but I may not be able to lend you any more money for the future crops because it looks like the market is going to diminish.

So it was that conservative move by the Portland banker that influenced Hood River patriots to put back the names of the Japanese boys and to quit the persecution.

Levenson: That was using muscle, wasn't it?

Cozzens: Yes, we used everything we could -- money, muscle!

#### Renunciants and the Return to Japan

Levenson: There were about fifteen hundred Japanese-Americans who wanted to go back to Japan. Can you generalize at all about the sort of people who chose to return, and how did you handle the situation?





Cozzens: Well, what we did, we increased the capacity of Tule Lake from thirteen thousand to seventeen thousand people. We reserved a separate area for those people who didn't want to relocate any place in the United States, and who'd made statements to the effect that they wanted to go back to Japan. Then, we moved all those people to that reserved area at Tule Lake; this way we had them all in one group.

The younger people who made the statement were mostly forced to make the statement by the older people. We were sure of that. There were many of those young kids who never did want to go back to Japan but they were there. So we had them in one section of the area of Tule Lake and they were restricted pretty well as to movements and things of that kind during the period because of their wishes to be Japanese. But they could withdraw from that anytime during that period that they wanted to and come back and be on the American side of the fence -- And many of them did. I don't know how many, but I would say a really large number did. The final movement of those people, I had very little to do with, as it was handled directly by our manager up there. I was busy with other things at the time. They were brought down and put on boats for Japan.

#### Effects of Resettlement Out of the Centers

Levenson: How well did the resettlement program work?

Cozzens: We were able to relocate Japanese-Americans in every state of the Union, with the exception, I think, of either North or South Carolina. We had a little girl come back from Boston. She'd never been out of California prior to the war. She returned to Livingston, in the San Joaquin Valley. Mr. Myer was with me, and we stopped there on the way through, from the South one trip, and called on her, and the family. They'd just been relocated. She came home. She was glad to be home. She talked with a Boston accent. She said, "I enjoyed my whole time that I was relocated." She said, "You know, in California, I'm just another Japanese. But in Boston, I was the curio." She was a clerk in one of the better stores in Boston. Her reaction, was very interesting to me.



Levenson: How old was she, do you think, in 1942?

Cozzens: Oh, about twenty, I imagine. Eighteen or twenty. A cute girl, and very interesting. She'd been to college, and was a college graduate.

I have a friend who is a clerk in a market in Salinas. His father was originally a labor contractor of Japanese for beet-topping in the Salinas Valley years and years ago, when they did it all by hand. He and his father and the family, his family, were evacuated, and they were stationed at Poston, Arizona. He had two daughters and a son born there. I met his daughter not too long ago. She's Vice Principal at one of the top schools here in Salinas. He said, as far as he's concerned, he surely was sorry they had to go, but as far as he's concerned, his family was raised there. They were raised without any pressures, and when they came back, they came back to a new life -- not to the ghetto. You see, they were able to go anyplace when they came back, and they located in the area outside of the Japanese ghetto and, before the evacuation, most of the Japanese were in one section of the town. When they came back, they were able to move around much more freely than they ever did before.

Levenson: How do you account for this?

Cozzens: There's been a change of attitude on the part of the Caucasians and on the part of the Japanese. The Japanese didn't feel that they had to be together any more after they relocated all over the United States. The relocation program that WRA put on during the war was the greatest thing that ever happened to the Japanese people in America. They were happy. They were all located in three states before that, in concentrated areas, living in -- oh, I wouldn't say squalor, but very poorly. Very, very poorly. Living in shacks and things of that kind. After the war, when they came back, even the poorer or medium-class Japanese, came back to live like part of the general population. They lived as Japanese before. They came back living a life similar to the American people. And the kids liked hamburgers, instead of sukiyaki and a lot of other things. Because they'd lived all over the United States.



## V WRA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS with T. E. "Pat" Frayne

Frayne's Newspaper Background

Cozzens: You asked me a question at our last interview in reference to what we did in public relations work on the coast.

Prior to the time that Mr. Frayne came with us, we had a person who didn't do much for us. Then I heard about Pat and his background, which he'll tell you more about. He was a sports writer and one of the world's best, over a period of years. When I went to interview him he was then assistant editor of the Chronicle in San Francisco. From the time Pat came with us we started to make hay and develop a relationship with the press and with the public as a whole that we never had before. I used to say to Pat "Let's go call on our friends," and Pat said, "What do you want to call on our friends for? Let's go call on our enemies! You can always make friends." From then on the guidance of the public relations work was in Pat's hands and he did a terrific job!

Levenson: Mr. Frayne, could you tell us about your background before you came in to WRA?

Frayne: I'd been a newspaper man since I was a dropout from high school in Los Angeles, Loyola High, and worked for the United Press, the San Francisco News, the Sacramento Star down again to the Call in San Francisco, later the Call-Bulletin and a city hall reporter. I was made sports editor at the age of twenty-six, in 1925, just before I turned twenty-seven and held that position until the end of 1940 when I was discharged. It said in the official letter "for reasons of economy," but later William Randolph Hearst, Jr. told me in Paris when I was working for the Marshall Plan that I was fired for my union activities and I could come back any time I wanted. So -- as a matter of fact, he offered me a job in Pittsburgh as sports editor. But I wanted to stay in San Francisco. I appreciated Mr. Hearst's attitude.





Frayne:

I went over to work for the Chronicle, after being for a year as Executive Secretary of the Newspaper Guild. The reason for my firing was that I was an avid sports editor and I was a leader in establishing the Newspaper Guild because of the underpaid workers and all the conditions that surrounded the working press. So Lawrence Davies, local correspondent of the New York Times, who recently died, a friend of Dillon Myer and Bob Cozzens, recommended that they grab me. So they grabbed me and I enjoyed working for them. My first connection with the Japanese-American problem was at the time of the evacuation. Two of my daughters, then going to high school in Redwood City, said to me at the dinner table, "Daddy, why can't you do something about stopping this evacuation? You're a member of the draft board," which I was in Redwood City, San Carlos and Woodside. "Now you have a voice there, why can't you stop it? Those Japanese-American kids that we go to school with are just as good Americans as we are!"

I said, "I can't do anything about it because the Army is in charge of it."

So anyway, they went down to see all these Japanese-American classmates off to Tanforan where they were housed in the horsebarns and under the grandstands and things of that sort. Then I saw the demonstration of the graduating class of which these Japanese-American students were members, and were not present for their own graduation. This was in 1942. It was held in the front of Sequoia High School in the open air and nothing but Caucasian parents and children present. The principal of the school, whose name should go down in good memory announced the winners of the scholarship awards of the year. Two of them were Japanese-American boys and one was a Japanese-American girl. And to this, the assembled parents applauded. But in the meantime, the children were under the grandstands living a monastic life. So unknown, unpublished and unrecorded was the fact that a group of Sequoia High School teachers went to the Tanforan Race Track and held a graduation exercise for the Japanese-American children there.

Levenson: That's a good sort of story.

Frayne: Yes. But that was the beginning. Then later when I went with the WRA, I was conscious that my children, like all youth of today, have an advanced view of what should go on



Frayne: in the world. This generation of youth may be a little unacceptable to the old folks, but so apparently was the youth before them.

The property rights of the Japanese-Americans were undoubtedly invaded in many centers. In our particular area a man who had a warehouse approached me and asked me if I wanted a radio. He had a number of radios that were confiscated from the Japanese and he would be happy to give me one, as he indicated he might have given to other people. I said, "No, thanks," and let it go at that.

I don't know how widespread this breach of property rights was. There were automobiles and furniture, frigidaires and other things that were stored in about three warehouses just in the San Francisco Bay area. How many of these were confiscated by unconscionable citizens, we'll never know.

Cozzens: Pat has an ability that I never saw before in anybody. Prior to the time I came with WRA or prior to the time I had somebody like Pat to work with, I worked with many public relations officers in government. Every time I wrote a speech or wrote an article, after they edited it and I got it back I couldn't read it.

Pat would come in and say, "I think we ought to do so and so. What do you want to say about it?" We'd only talk five minutes or so. I'd try to pick out two or three things that I thought were important and I said, "You finish it." When the article came back it was in my language -- not in his language. That is an extraordinary ability that I had never seen in a person before!

It was just unbelievable! I could take an article -- like a couple of speeches here which you probably would like copies of -- I could take those articles and just read them over once before I went to a meeting to give them with no problem. There was nothing difficult in them because he brought it down to my level of thinking.

Frayne: We were both on the same level. I think we were probably both high school drop-outs! [Laughter]



Cozzens: But that ability was something that I've always raved to everybody about because it was something that I had never seen in anybody else.

Frayne: Well, that sounds good. It is too late for me to start arguing with you now, Bob. [Laughter]

Levenson: Well let's hear a little bit about your relations with the Fair Play Committee and the other people who were working for Japanese-Americans.

Frayne: Our main problem was to inform the public of the constitutional rights of the Japanese-Americans. We had figures showing that, though over 300,000 German aliens lived in the United States and over 600,000 Italian aliens lived in the United States, none of those were put into relocation centers because their rights were recognized mainly because of their slightly different color than Japanese-Americans.

The thing that struck me is my mother was born in Dublin, Ireland and my father was of Irish parentage and Ireland was neutral and we didn't put any of the Irish in! [Laughter]

We went about sending out releases on what was going on in the relocation centers. In one case we publicized, I guess it was Poston, Arizona, where some of the elders wanted to take down the flag at the camp and the Japanese-American boy scouts surrounded the flag post and refused to let their elders do it! We put out stories of that sort.

### Initial Problems

Levenson: What was your position when you came into WRA?

Frayne: It was in early 1943 that Bob Cozzens and Dillon Myer brought me into WRA, and the first problem was to get people to think that I wasn't anti-American and pro-Japanese. There was a lot of heavy war going on at that time. But having been an executive secretary of the Guild, the newspapermen, I think, trusted me a little more and it might have been a selling point that I had to my advantage.





Frayne:

We immediately began to assemble all the anti-WRA material that was appearing in the newspapers and keeping a record of it, especially what was antagonistic, and found of course, that probably 90% of the California press was going along the so-called "patriotic" line of that time. This was added to by government commissions outside the WRA.

A sidelight to a story we never published was that of a request from Heart Mountain, Wyoming. A Caucasian employee who called our office and wanted to know if we could get cassocks and surplices for their choir of Japanese-American girls who were singing at Mass. The caller herself was an Episcopalian, maybe a converted Catholic. But she wanted to have them dressed up for the Mass there. So I called the archbishop's office at that time and asked them if they had such things that they could send, about a dozen to these girls. It would be a good contribution.

A top secretary said, 'Why, we can't because we don't have cassocks and surplices for choirs in our own church and besides we didn't know that there was a Catholic church up at a relocation center.'

Of course, this was the archbishop's secretary. The archbishop hadn't known it -- so we had to tell them to go ahead, sing in their dungarees and the Lord'd hear them just as well! [Laughter]

We had an incident up there with a bunch of Japanese-American kids at Tule Lake who saw a lot of ducks on the pond up there. They took off the windshields of a little panel truck they had there and closed all the doors of the panel truck and they drove headlong into this field of ducks. The driver ducked down below the wheel and the ducks went flying into the panel truck. It was an ingenious idea by these young fellows and they got themselves loaded with about a hundred wild ducks that they were going to use for their meals. This would be a special delight. But they took them away from them. It was against the fish and game laws or something.

Cozzens:

They not only took them away, they put the kids in jail! The judge sentenced those kids to Chico. They went to the County Jail for six months or something like that.



Cozzens: And the same day that these boys did this and got sentenced to jail, they caught two fellows up there from Tule Lake that had a truckload of ducks they fined them \$25 apiece and let them keep the ducks!

Levenson: That's outrageous.

Cozzens: Well, that's justice for you! You know it was one of those things! Those are the things we went through.

Frayne: Then there was the case of George Harada, who was a sergeant in the Marine Corps in Tarawa. He was brought back to the United States after being wounded and into San Diego. He went over to Manzanar to visit his father and mother. His father was an American Japanese, his mother was Mexican-American and he was a wounded veteran, to visit his father and mother in a relocation center! So I wanted to put out that story and I called up the Marine Corps headquarters in San Francisco, an officer I knew -- a former newspaper man also -- and told him about this story and that we'd like to publish it.

He said, "Well, don't publish that," he said. "You know it's against our rules to have Orientals in the Marine Corps. [Laughter] So I said, "Listen, this fellow deserves some sort of mention in the press." So he said, "Well give me twenty-four hours to check on this. I don't think he is Oriental." So he called me back in less than twenty-four hours and said, "You're right. His father is of Japanese ancestry, his mother, Mexican. But if you don't publish that story, we will not fire him from the Marines for lying to us that he was pure Caucasian blood." I said, "Well, I won't put that story out until after the war is over."

I hadn't put it out until now.

Levenson: I'm glad we have it now, even though it is really such a disgusting story.

Frayne: Well, that was the temper of the country at that time.



Levenson: Of course there were a lot of Nisei in the Navy as well as in the Army. Why was the Marine Corps so racist?

Frayne: Well it never had Orientals in it until World War II. Then they had Chinese and George Harada was the first Japanese-American marine.

We put out stories about Manzanar, I believe it was, where a young Mexican boy from Los Angeles High School was sent to Manzanar because all his classmates, who were Japanese -- of Japanese ancestry -- were ordered into the relocation centers and he went to his draft board when he was drafted and says, "I am Japanese-American," and the sergeant said, "No, you're not. You're a Mexican. How can you prove it?"

He said, "I've got Japanese blood in me and as long as I've got Japanese blood in me I can't serve in the Army." He wanted to go along with his Japanese-American chums. So the sergeant says, "What the hell, go ahead! You say you are Japanese and I can't prove you are not." So he went along and he later became the student body president of Manzanar High School and was sent as a delegate with several of the Japanese-American -- truly Japanese-American boys -- to a convention in Salt Lake City I believe it was. They had a high old time and for the first time he was happy because he got potatoes instead of rice! [Laughs]

Levenson: How did you see your main problems? Did you try to crack the Hearst press?

Frayne: Well, I went to see Bill Wren who was editor of the Examiner of San Francisco and I gave him stories that I later repeated to the motion picture representatives. I said, "Bill, you know this is a small minority that the country is trying to segregate and after they get through throwing all the Japanese-Americans out of the country -- which they intended to do at that time, just bar them from everything --

Levenson: Who were "they"?





Frayne: "They" would be the writers of pamphlets and so-called public officials who were espousing clearing the United States of any elements but Caucasians. We still have them, of course. I said "The next minority they will take after is your minority." Mr. Wren was of Jewish ancestry.

I then went to Harry Brand, who was an executive officer of Twentieth Century Fox -- another former sports writer -- they get around you know. I told him that some of his pictures being produced were discrediting Japanese-Americans as being subversive and a threat to the country. I told him the same story. Harry was Jewish. "The next minority that they'd get after will be yours. This is just the opening wedge." I said, "Furthermore, the next minority couldn't be Irish because [Laughing] there's too many of us!"

They toned down a lot of that as I remember. In fact, it disappeared. I don't know whether just one simple talk was enough. It didn't temper the Hearst press, as I remember.

Some of the things we went through, the antagonism at these public addresses we had to make -- I talked before the Lions Club in Santa Rosa one day. When I got through explaining all the constitutional rights and all the arguments, still several guys stood up in the back of the hall and said, "A Jap's a Jap!" We always had to encounter that.

Levenson: Did you solicit speaking invitations in places where you knew that the majority of people would be hostile?

Frayne: Well, no we didn't solicit these, as I remember. We were approached by some decent-minded citizen who wanted to hear the other side of the story -- such as the Commonwealth Club does.

The "Japanese" Shelling of Santa Barbara: A Stunt by the Treasury to Promote the Sale of War Bonds?

Frayne: I had a friend who was in charge of selling treasury bonds, war bonds. They were a little slow going, so they had to build up fear in the state, that California might be invaded



- Frayne: by the Japanese. So a submarine threw a blast of rocket fire -- or it was just gun fire in those days -- at Goleta.
- Levenson: That would be a Japanese submarine?
- Frayne: Supposedly a Japanese submarine. So I asked my friend, who has since passed away, "Was this on the square?" and he laughed. He didn't openly admit that it was an American submarine, but nobody was hit except the fears of Californians that there might be an invasion immediately.
- Levenson: That is quite something, isn't it? Was he an official of the Treasury or what was he?
- Frayne: He was a regional officer who was high in the brackets there. I don't want to reveal his name.
- Levenson: What would your conclusion be? Was there any actual gunfire -- any invasion of American soil at any time by Japanese ships?
- Frayne: Only in the remote areas of north United States, when the Japanese sent up balloons which in one case hit in, I think it was Washington, where there was a minister and a number of his parish children were having a picnic and a number of them were killed by this bomb that had been blown over to the United States. This precedes all these ballistic missiles.
- Levenson: We have a fairly full report on the fire balloons.\*
- Frayne: Have you?
- Levenson: As far as I can recall from reading the report it only notes one ranger injured when a balloon exploded on landing.
- Frayne: I think there was one that -- Does your report show that one of them went back as far as Wisconsin before it dropped?
- Levenson: I don't remember, but they were found on the West Coast from Alaska to Mexico. Apparently, over 9,000 were launched, of which an estimated 900 to 1,000 reached the continent.

---

\*"Japanese Incendiary Balloons, 1945," Transcript of interview with C.R. Clar and others, 1966. State of California, Division of Forestry. Ray Clar papers, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



Levenson: The report was done by the California State Division of Forestry and is a solid, respectable, common-sense report.

Relations with Earl Warren

Levenson: I'd like to hear a bit about your relationships with Warren, Governor Earl Warren.

Frayne: Well, of course, the record shows -- I don't have to add to it -- that as Attorney General, he went along with the evacuation and then as Governor he went along with continuing the evacuation. He was elected during the war. He was no different than the United States Supreme Court, which also kept its mouth shut till the war was practically over. Finally the Supreme Court ruled that these American concentration camps were unconstitutional. Bob Cozzens took me to Sacramento to talk to Earl Warren and he had changed his mind about this thing after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

Levenson: He had changed his mind or did you two help to change it?

Frayne: Well, it is pretty hard to say. [Laughs] We didn't influence any of his subsequent Supreme Court decisions, when he was on the United States Supreme Court where he did a wonderful job. So I don't know. He said to Bob Cozzens, "Well, I knew it was unconstitutional all the time."

Levenson: He said that?

Frayne: Yes. That's what he said, Bob?

Cozzens: Yes. That is what he told us.

Levenson: Did you find Warren hostile when you went in to talk with him? Mr. Cozzens gave me the impression that he was a little hostile and a little belligerent, but that in the course of that five hour meeting, [late 1944] he turned around.

Frayne: Well, I am impaired from being critical of Earl Warren because --





Levenson: We are not trying to criticize. We are trying to find out what happened and to have a record for people later who want to study this period and this man. There is no malice involved at all.

Frayne: Well, he didn't endorse us. [Laughs] I could say that. Not until the Supreme Court decision came down -- the U.S. Supreme Court.

Levenson: Warren was the governor

Frayne: Yes, he was the governor. I believe that he recognizes that he made a mistake in not doing something.

Levenson: No, he doesn't. According to one source, he feels if he had to do it all over again with the information that he had to hand, he would have to do it exactly the same way. He does not want to mea culpa over the Japanese-American relocation.

Frayne: Well, times have changed and even the Latin mea culpa has gone out of the ritual of the church. [Laughter] They've turned it all into English!

Cozzens: And I don't think there is any question -- well, let me put it this way -- we never had any bad press from Sacramento after our meeting with the governor. I think, while the governor, in his heart was a little before his time, he went along with the pressures.

After the meeting, he realized that the inevitable was going to take place and from then on -- he went overboard to be a liberal on national events!

Frayne: Yes, he wanted perfect liaison with our office. I was supposed to keep him informed on how many Japanese-Americans were moving in and when, where.

Cozzens: We kept him strictly informed on everything that happened.



Anti-Japanese-American moves in the California Legislature

Levenson: What did you do when a motion was brought before the legislature to forbid the return of Japanese-Americans to California?

Frayne: With all the public opinion against them, as evidenced in the attacks on Japanese-Americans when they came home and attempts to keep them out, even in the legislature, why Vic Firth and I had to go up to Sacramento. We went up to Sacramento to visit Jack Tenney and Hugh Burns who had a resolution in there to declare it the sense of the legislature that no Japanese-American would be permitted to return to the state. An adjutant from the Presidio and Firth conferred with Tenney and Burns and when they came out, why, Tenney and Burns had been convinced because they withdrew their resolution.

This followed on a precedent established by John F. Shelley, a congressman -- first a state senator, later congressman in Washington and later mayor of San Francisco. Shelley was a San Francisco union labor leader. In Sacramento as a senator, he was conscious of the discrimination against the Japanese-Americans. So he went up to DeWitt General Hospital where a number of veteran Japanese, some with legs off had been cared for and brought a group of them down to the senate chambers at a time when George Hatfield from Modesto had a resolution in there also barring Japanese-Americans from ever returning to California.

Levenson: About when would this be?

Frayne: This would be right in the middle of the war. It must have been 1944.

Cozzens: '44 or '45. About the middle, I would say, of the war.

Frayne: I think I've got it in that group of papers.

So Shelley said, when this resolution was about to be brought up, "Gentlemen, I would like to have you hear a few words from some American war veterans, wounded American war veterans."



Frayne:                So in troops this group, some on crutches. One of them hesitantly got up there and the senate suddenly discovered they were all Japanese-Americans. And this one who made the talk, hesitantly, told about how he, as a returning war veteran, had been received with hostility as had his companions and they couldn't understand it. They had done their best for their country. So on and so forth. When they were through, why, the senatorial chambers applauded them.

George Hatfield walked over to Shelley and said, "You win, Jack." He withdrew his resolution.

Levenson:            Did you have anything to do with this?

Frayne:               Well, I was with Jack Shelley for years. I don't want to pat myself on the back.

Levenson:            Well, no, but this is -- Shelley organized it?

Frayne:               Shelley and I were old friends. I used to write about him when he was a football player at the University of San Francisco!

Cozzens:             Jack Shelley put on the show, but he was given the facts by Pat Frayne.

Levenson:            Well, that is the point. This is the sort of thing I am trying to extract from you, is what you did and what you helped other people do to help the Japanese-Americans. So you shouldn't be so modest.

Cozzens:             No. It was organized by Pat, there is no question about that.

#### Helping with Resettlement: Shelley and Labor

Frayne:               I used every one of my friends that I could. When Jack Shelley was with the San Francisco labor council we had a case of a Japanese-American mechanic who was brought back to work on the Municipal Railway and the white employees





Frayne: -- some of them -- started to object. So I called Shelley about it and Shelley went out to the Muni barn and he called all these other mechanics together and he said, "What is the objection to this man?" "Well, he's a Jap." "Well what has that got to do with it? He's an American, too. Everybody's ancestry is foreign. By the way," he said to the leader, "where do you come from?" He replied, "I come from Oklahoma." "Oh," Shelley said, "you're one of those Okies and Arkies everybody dislikes!" [Laughter]

And he told them that they'd have to work with this fellow and if he was a bad mechanic then turn him in. But if he wasn't, he had a right to his job.

Well, I don't like to take credit for needling anybody's conscience. Shelley -- he was just a good man who recognized facts. In a labor council meeting where they tried to pass a resolution, (all these resolutions were always coming up to bar them from returning) why, Shelley stood up and said, "I'll take the floor." He got right down to this job. He said, "How many of you harps around here have parents that came from the old country?" He said, "The Japanese-Americans have as much rights as the Irish-Americans!" He was that type of fellow.

#### The Fair Play Committee

Levenson: What were your relations with the Fair Play Committee?

Frayne: Well, I think that I was incidental to them. Because they did all their own work. Ruth Kingman gave a spirit -- she was the guardian angel of that group, along with Harry Kingman.\* They went about their particular department and never let up -- always enthusiastic and they kept pitching all the time to get this recognition restored to the Americans. They organized groups. Bob Cozzens had a lot to do with them; it didn't come out of my department.

We had three other people eventually in public relations. We had Bob Greenock of San Francisco and Eddie O'Dea in Los Angeles and Florence West in Seattle, and those people

---

\* See interview with Harry Kingman, "Citizenship in a Democracy," Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.



Frayne: contributed so much. We all did the same type of work. But as it started out I was the only one but they gave me all this help. They were good people.

Cozzens: And the thought. Pat had a good program to put over. It was covered by the whole group in the same manner. It was never four public relation officers going in four different directions. Everybody went in the same direction. I don't think we ever had any trouble, where we had people pulling against each other after we got this organization.

Frayne: Who was the fellow from the Congregational Church who was so active in there?

Levenson: Galen Fisher?

Frayne: Yes.

Cozzens: Galen Fisher. He called upon us regularly. Ruth Kingman was to see us at least once a week and generally a couple of times a week. We were able to keep those people informed on everything that we were doing that wasn't strictly off the record as far as we were concerned. Because we had access to all the military movements. We had access to everything that was going on in the world at that time. I did, at least. Pat was filled in on most of it -- except there were a few things I didn't feel I should tell him. But we released everything else to these people and we trusted them and they came along -- well, they protected that trust, I think, in every case.

Then as we started to bring people back, why then the organizations -- the new organizations -- cropped up, like the Catholic group in Los Angeles, the Presbyterian group here and all the Protestant church groups in the North and the Catholic groups in the North -- all worked with the Fair Play Committee and everybody else. So that was the way -- that was the thing that helped us over a lot of rough spots. Those people helped us over many rough spots, because we couldn't do it all alone.

Frayne: Well it was due to these groups of people we were able to move back, even though there were some incidents of bombings and sniping and shooting into homes, attempts at intimidation.



### Roosevelt's Ploy

Frayne: Over the years we have seen so many people switch and some use subterfuge for their acts. One of the greatest subterfuges was used by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who announced to the correspondents in Washington that nothing would be done about returning the Japanese to the West Coast. Do you remember that, Bob? Here it appeared in the press and we were reading it in the press the same time we had all the plans for "RX Day" as it was called "Return of Evacuees" and all the arrangements and plans for them, orderly and everything else -- which Roosevelt had agreed to!

Well, he didn't want to give any forewarning to the racists of California, so he told the correspondents a little white lie. [Laughter] A white lie and there wasn't going to be a move put on -- and we had it all on the top of our desks! Roosevelt might have been able to stop that thing in the first place but evidently he was ill-advised.

### Robert Kenny's Assistance to WRA

Frayne : Bob Kenny as state Attorney General, was a great exponent of our cause. He and I had lots of relationships and contacts. He was said to have influenced Warren finally to accept the inevitable and also went around and liberalized the groups. Mrs. Kingman worked with him a lot.

Cozzens: I think that Bob Kenny did a great deal to help us but his hands were pretty well tied. I made that trip, remember, for three days in the San Joaquin Valley with him. We called on dozens of law enforcement officers but no immediate action came out of any of it. But Bob did a lot of good by being there and discussing this with them. But until it was definitely known that -- well, I wouldn't say definitely known because we didn't take Bob down there until after the Japanese-Americans started to come back. But because of pressures that were put on by Bob, I think that these fellows started really to work. But he did it other ways. I don't know just how, but things started to happen rapidly then, afterwards.





Levenson: Did he run into hostility from the local people?

Cozzens: Oh, yes. Very much so.

Levenson: Can you illustrate that?

Cozzens: Well, we called -- I can't think of the place where they shot this house up with a shotgun -- it was out of Orosi near Clovis -- I think. But I am not sure.

Levenson: We can check that later.

Frayne: I think it was Clovis, yes. Isn't it on any of those lists there?

Cozzens: No. I didn't see it, but it might have been.

For instance, we went to call on this one person, where two nights before they had shot through the house and there was a baby laying in the crib. The Japanese picked the baby up and took it out and they never moved that pillow until we got there and you could see the outline of the little head, like that [illustrating] and if you took a stick you could poke it right through the two holes in the crib where the bullet went through. It honestly didn't miss the baby's head more than a half an inch! A 30-30 rifle deal.

Well, we talked to the sheriff of Fresno County and he said, "Well, we have no way in the world to find out who did it. You can't go out and check every house and see who fired a gun."

And then they shot some other house up with a shotgun. We talked to one of the deputies of the sheriff about that down there and they said, "Well, everybody's got shotguns."

Well, they finally caught one fellow and took him in court. What did the judge give him? He gave him three months and then suspended the sentence. So you talk about resistance -- we had nothing but resistance. From the law and the court and the people.



- Frayne: Well, there was that case of the bombing up at Auburn. Possession of dynamite was supposed to be against the law and these people were caught with it -- they'd bombed this home. We got the local United States District Attorney to go up and prosecute the case in Sacramento. He went up there himself. With all the evidence in there, self-evident to us at least, the jury found him not guilty.
- Cozzens: They had the people and everything and found them not guilty.
- Frayne: They had them with the dynamite; they had the sticks of dynamite -- but that was the temper of the West Coast at that time.
- Cozzens: You know it is unbelievable when you stop and think of the hostility that existed! The only difference between that and the radicals of today is that those people, with the exception of the shooting when they came back, there were very few breaking of windows or tearing the town apart, things of that kind. These were individual acts. There is very little difference between those people of that day and these people of today except that was an individual thing against an individual group of people.
- Now this group of today is against the -- what do they call it?
- Frayne: The establishment?
- Cozzens: The establishment. Those people in that day were economic opportunists, as I told you I use that term rather than cuss them out -- which I like to do --
- Levenson: Feel free.

Dealing with Rumors: The Case of the "Anti-Japanese Army Dogs"

- Levenson: You were going to tell me about your research on the rumor that the Army had trained dogs to attack Japanese in the Pacific and that those dogs were now being released and were savaging Japanese-Americans in California?



Frayne: Yes. If you like, I'll read from a press release I prepared on this. It was pretty thoroughly researched!

Levenson: Fine.

Frayne: "When a retired Army war dog jumped the fence in Albany, California, and bit the leg and ankle of Mrs. Ume Akagi, a Japanese-American, it behooved an imaginative reporter to state in his story that the dog was actuated by the 'scent' of the Japanese woman and had been trained to track down 'Japanese' and attack them.

"The story of the attack opened up a new field of worry for the West Coast representatives of the War Relocation Authority, Department of the Interior, for more than half of the original 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry evacuated from that area in 1942 had been returned to their homes and constitutional rights. One might well imagine that an epidemic of such attacks might break out wherever a returned Army War Dog veteran would 'scent' a person of Japanese ancestry.

"It opened up discussion of racial scents in which a host of amateur authorities contended that certain races had distinguishing body odors and that the Army War Dogs had been trained to attack on the basis of B.O. Perhaps dogs used against German and Italian enemies in the recent war might continue their attitudes of belligerency against Americans of those descents.

"The amateur authorities, easily contended that persons of Japanese ancestry ate fish and rice and therefore they possessed a scent that was distinguishable. Carrying on from there it was possible that War Dogs used against Germans might attack persons who ate sauerkraut and drank beer. Or dogs used against Italian enemy soldiers might attack persons who were addicted to spaghetti and garlic.

"But Clarence J. Pfaffenberger of San Francisco who had been instrumental in establishing the K-9 Corps on the West Coast sprang quickly to the fore to dispel the possibility of another myth.





Frayne:

"He had been present at the indoctrination of the dogs at their training camp near San Carlos, California and possessed a complete record of all the dogs involved as well as the history of the curricula they received.

"Quote, 'In the first place, we trained War Dogs in just several instances for attack. This was done for show purposes,' explained Pfaffenberger.

'We were assisted at that time by two Nisei -- American-born Japanese -- soldiers who broke away from their American diet to take on a diet of fish and rice. But despite the short training along this line, it was found that the several dogs trained to attack would not distinguish between any diet scent. So we gave up the idea and trained the dogs for alerting and message carrying. They would only attack at the signal given by their Army masters. And then the attack called for jumping at the arm of the victim, not the leg. Obviously, any dog attacking the leg of a victim would be an easy target for a bullet or a bayonet.'

"Pfaffenberger pointed out that the attack on the Japanese-American women was the second Army Dog attack on record. One previous case on the San Francisco peninsula was against two young Caucasians who had teased and aggravated a K-9 veteran. 'It is necessary, however,' said Pfaffenberger, 'that the War Dogs be given ample time for readjustment, especially if they had seen overseas service. They need a good rest before being turned loose, where they might be subject to aggravation.'

"Pfaffenberger went further in sifting the case of the attack on Mrs. Akagi and addressing a lengthy inquiry to Col. J. H. Burgheim, who referred the case to Mrs. Milton Erlanger, Civilian Consultant on Army War Dogs, Office of the Quartermaster General, Washington, D.C.

"The reply revealed that the offending war dog, known as Res, Preston brand #87H5, owned by Mr. Fred Hoffler, Jr., 641 Jackson Street, Albany, California, had been received in the Army on January 13th, 1945 and was given the standard basic training at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, but was declared surplus to the needs of the Army and returned to Hoffler on September 18, 1945.



Frayne:

"That official information dispelled the theory that the attacking War Dog had been overseas attacking Japanese enemy and was allergic to persons of Japanese ancestry.

"'As you know, of course,' says the official report 'Nothing whatsoever in the Army training doctrine, policy or procedure in any way involves the distinguishing between race, nationality or military affiliation of individuals. Army War Dogs are trained to be alert to the presence of any or all individuals other than their handlers. It is up to the handlers to ascertain whether the individuals are friend or foe.

"'Regardless of the possibilities of training dogs to make distinctions, such as outlined above, the mixture of races, colors and national origins making up the United States Forces would preclude the use of such training for American Army War Dogs.'

"The official statement from Pfaffenberger makes the following points:

"There is no official record of Army War Dogs, either in training or in active duty making any distinction between individuals on the basis of their race or diet.

"No Army War Dogs have been trained for attack work, except several used for exhibition purposes early in the war in this country.

"Army War Dogs are no more prone to attack than are civilian dogs of comparable temperament.

"Because some 21,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were in the United States Army at the close of the war, Pfaffenberger asked specifically for information on the possibility of further attacks on persons of Japanese ancestry.

"'Army dogs were trained to alert to any presence other than that of their handler or those persons specifically approved by their handlers. Dogs were not trained to alert to Japanese on a basis of race or national origin.' Replied the Quartermaster General's office.



Frayne: "In the cool analysis of the investigation, it appears that Freedom from Fear of War Dog Bites should be herewith established."

When it comes down to it, we never let anything that came up attacking them lie as a fact. We went out and attacked it. It took a lot of research and writing.

Levenson: Well I suppose that while on one level this seems very trivial on another it is very important, in illustrating how you operated.

Frayne: Yes.

#### Frayne Accused of Communism as a Result of His Work With WRA

Frayne: Years after when Bob Gibson, I and Mrs. Josephine Duveneck were accused of being Communist sympathizers, the reason given was that Gibson and the rest of us had started talking to the California Labor School, "a known Communist organization" -- allegedly, of course. So I followed that up by writing to the Secretary of the Interior, McKay. Not receiving a reply to my first letter within two weeks, I sent a telegram and then I got a reply. The reply was evasive and just stated that the California Labor School, under some Congressional notation was a Communist-oriented organization. That is as much as they said about it. So I sent another letter, requesting further clarification because I was not a Communist sympathizer. I had to follow that up two weeks later when no answer came to the second letter with a telegram.

At this time I was working for Attorney General Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, as his press secretary. I pointed out that all my family had been in the service, except me, in World War II. Then came another letter that still didn't absolve me. Well, I think the third letter I sent was followed up by a telegram also. The only way to get a reply was to make it public property that way. In the last letter, I pointed out that as a member of the State Department





Frayne: with the Marshall Plan for Economic Cooperation Administration, I had spent approximately four years in Europe with an americanizing program for labor unions -- in Greece and then in Paris as liaison officer for nine European countries -- and that I certainly would not have been accepted by the State Department if I had been a Communist sympathizer, that I had practically fought Communism. That was our purpose.

Then I got a letter fully exonerating me by saying that as a matter of fact, the record showed that I had been opposing Communism through all my career and so on and so forth. It took me about four or five months to clear my name of the alleged stigma that they had at first planted on Bob Gibson and Josephine Duveneck and also, I forgot to mention, Hubert Stoltz, who died within the past year. He was at that time Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California. I called Hubert and he said, "Oh, the hell with them," he said. "I am going to retire in a few months and I'm not going to ask to be exonerated on such a silly charge as that!" So he didn't do anything about it. Of course, Mrs. Duveneck, she couldn't care less, I guess. I didn't even call her on the thing, because I know what a wonderful job she had done in relation to Japanese-Americans.

Cozzens: If this came up again tomorrow or next week, this whole thing could start all over again if the pressures were right, the economic pressures are right. Don't you think so?

Frayne: Well, I don't know if it will ever get back to a racial basis again. There is such a diffusion of races that there might be some other economic reason.

Transcriber: Jane West  
Final Typist: Wendy Won



## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Washington 25, D. C.

April 4, 1944

Honorable Francis Biddle  
Attorney General  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Attorney General

This is in reply to your letter of February 26, 1944 with reference to Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt's Final Report on Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, which was recently made public by the War Department.

You state that you are interested in the accuracy of General DeWitt's account, in the first two chapters of the Report, of the events leading to his decision that military necessity required the evacuation, and you note that prevention of signaling by persons, presumably of Japanese descent, on shore to enemy surface vessels or submarines off the coast apparently was a very considerable part of the problem with which General DeWitt was concerned during the period between December 1941 and July 1, 1942, when the evacuation was substantially complete. You direct attention particularly to his reference to hundreds of reports of such signaling by means of signal lights and unlawful radio transmitters and state that investigation by the Department of Justice of great numbers of rumors concerning signal lights and radio transmitters proved them, without exception, to be baseless.

You inquire, first, whether during the period from December 1941 to July 1, 1942, the Commission was engaged on the West Coast in monitoring and identifying signals reported to be from unlawful transmitters and in locating any such transmitters; and, if so, the number of reports received by the Commission during this period of unlawful or unidentified signals, with a detailed break-down of the results of its investigations:

Throughout this period on the West Coast as elsewhere throughout the United States and its territories, the Commission's Radio Intelligence Division was engaged in a comprehensive 24-hour surveillance of the entire radio spectrum to guard against any unlawful radio activity.



Within the area on the West Coast from which the Japanese were subsequently evacuated, the Commission's Radio Intelligence Division had in operation two Primary Monitoring Stations, located at Portland, Oregon, and San Pedro, California, and nine Secondary Monitoring Stations, located at Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; Arcata, California; Larkspur, California; Fresno, California; Los Angeles, California; San Diego, California; Yuma, Arizona, and Tucson, Arizona. During the period here involved, the Secondary Station at Larkspur, California, was moved to San Leandro, California, and was expanded to a Primary Monitoring Station; and the Secondary Station at Yuma, Arizona, was moved to Salinas, California. The Commission had additional stations at other places within the Western Defense Command.

At all stations, there were special receivers and recorders for intercepting and recording signals throughout the entire radio spectrum. The Primary Monitoring Stations were equipped with extensive antenna arrays and Adcock high-frequency direction-finding apparatus for taking bearings upon sky-wave signals received from all over the world. They were tied in with other Primary Monitoring Stations on the continent as well as in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, which together constituted a nation-wide direction-finding system for immediate coordinated action in taking bearings upon and establishing the fix of any suspected transmitter and for exchanging other information relative to identity of radio stations. At the Secondary Monitoring Stations were mobile units, equipped with loop direction finders, for going into the field and quickly locating an unidentified transmitter by taking bearings within its ground-wave range. Other devices enabled investigators to determine the exact house or even room in which a transmitter was located.

Soon after December 7, 1941, at the request of General DeWitt, the monitoring facilities described above were supplemented by patrols of mobile direction-finding intercept units along the West Coast from Canada to Mexico. These patrols were instituted for the particular purpose of detecting any radio transmissions from shore to ships off the coast.

In the early months of the war, the Commission's field offices and stations on the West Coast were deluged with calls, particularly from the Army and Navy, reporting suspicious radio signaling and requesting the identification of radio signals. In hundreds upon hundreds of cases, identification of the signal was made by Radio Intelligence Division personnel merely by listening to it right at the monitoring station. In no case was the transmission other than legitimate.





In the case of 760 reports of unidentified or unlawful radio signals within the evacuated area during the period in question, which could not be heard or identified by listening at the monitoring station, a field investigation was conducted by mobile direction-finding units. In 641 of the cases it was found that no radio signaling at all was involved. Of the 119 cases remaining, 116 were found to involve lawful transmissions by the following stations:

United States Army Stations	- 21
United States Navy Stations	- 8
Local Police Stations	- 12
United States and Foreign Commercial Licensed Stations	- 65
Japanese Stations in Japanese Territory	- 10
	<hr/> 116

The final 3 were found to involve the very short-range transmissions of the ordinary commercial type phonograph oscillator used in playing recordings for home amusement.

There were no radio signals reported to the Commission which could not be identified, or which were unlawful. Like the Department of Justice, the Commission knows of no evidence of any illicit radio signaling in this area during the period in question.

You also ask the extent to which General DeWitt or his subordinates were informed of the operations of the Commission's Radio Intelligence Division. The General and his staff were kept continuously informed of the Commission's work, both through occasional conferences and day-to-day liaison. In the earlier part of the war, there was constant contact by telephone between Radio Intelligence Division stations and Army and Navy posts along the West Coast for the purpose of furnishing these agencies with bearings and other information pertaining to radio signals. And as the result of a request of General DeWitt in January 1942, the Commission established a Radio Intelligence Center in San Francisco for coordinating radio intelligence information collected by the Army, Navy and the Commission. This Center was tied in by teletypewriter circuit with the Primary Monitoring Stations on the West Coast, as well as with other Primary Stations on the Continent through headquarters in Washington. As a result, it was an integral part of the Commission's nation-wide direction-finding system described above. As a part of the plan for coordinating activities, Army and Navy personnel maintained a liaison attendance at this Center. Both these services, moreover, had a direct telephone circuit from the Center to their headquarters.

You direct attention, further, to the statement in General DeWitt's Report that following the evacuation, interception of suspicious or



unidentified radio signals and shore-to-ship signal lights was virtually eliminated. You state it was the experience of the Department of Justice that, although no unlawful radio signaling or any unlawful shore-to-ship signaling with lights was discovered, a great number of reports of such activity were received, and that these did not diminish in number following the evacuation. It is likewise the Commission's experience that reports of unlawful radio signaling along the West Coast - which in each case were unfounded - were not affected by the evacuation. In fact, throughout the year 1942, the number of reports of unlawful radio operation requiring investigation by mobile units which were received in the States along the West Coast varied in close parallel with the number of such reports received throughout the whole country.

Finally, you refer to General LeWitt's memorandum of January 5, 1942 to James H. Rowe, Jr., Assistant to the Attorney General, set out in the Report, in which concern is expressed over the action to be taken in a case where there should be strong evidence of shore-to-submarine radio communication, but the unlawful radio transmitter could not be located within an area more precise than a city block, or even a general area such as Monterey County. You note that the memorandum suggested that available means were inadequate to locate and seize any such radio transmitter, but state that if your understanding that equipment was available for locating such a transmitter is correct, the problem with which General LeWitt was concerned would not arise in practice. Your understanding is correct. As noted above, equipment developed by the Commission's engineers was on and after December 7, 1941 in the hands of its personnel on the West Coast, which enabled them easily to locate the individual house and even the exact room containing a concealed transmitter.

Pursuant to your request for any other information we may have hearing on the accuracy of the statements in the Report indicating the existence of illicit radio signaling along the West Coast, additional facts are set forth in the enclosed memorandum.

Sincerely

/s/ JAMES LAWRENCE FLY  
Chairman





## WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

JUN 11 1943

Mr. Harry L. Kingman  
Young Men's Christian Association  
2227 Union Street  
Berkeley, California

Dear Mr. Kingman:

I was glad to have your letter of May 25 and its generally favorable report.

There are two encouraging comments on the situation in the Pacific. In a speech before a meeting of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on April 27, 1943, Admiral King said: "In December 1941 we were apprehensive, both the military and the civilian population, whether the western hemisphere would be invaded. We don't worry about that now. The expansion of Japanese forces in the Pacific has been checked." The New York Times of May 29 carries an interview with Robert Patterson, Under-Secretary of War, in which Mr. Patterson said "I don't believe an invasion is likely. It is difficult to see how they would do it. They would have to have command of the Pacific, and we are in control there."

Concerning the production of vegetables at the relocation centers, I am certain there would be an unlimited amount of Congressional pressure against commercial production of vegetables at the relocation centers. Our present policy is to aim at self-subsistence, a position we are able to support before the public, the Congress, or anyone else, but I believe we should have difficulty in justifying a greatly expanded agricultural program.

Sincerely yours,

*D. V. Myer*  
Director







## U. S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

461 Market Street  
San Francisco 5, California

C  
O  
P  
Y

December 4, 1945

Commander Jess Edington  
Hood River Post  
American Legion  
Hood River, Oregon

My dear Commander,

I am enclosing a copy of a newspaper story which states that you have erased the names of 18 American soldiers from the Hood River County War Memorial Honor Roll.

Can it be possible that a member of the Legion, who has taken the Legion Oath "to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of Justice, Freedom and Democracy" as well as knowing that race, color and creed do not bar any person from the full rights of American citizenship, could stoop to refutation of our basic American principles of the equality of all men?

The reason given for your un-American act is that these American soldiers are of Japanese ancestry. One of these soldiers is Private Eichi Wakamatsu, a former resident of Hood River, who was wounded in action in France on October 30. His parents live at the Granada Relocation Center of the War Relocation Authority.

Private George M. Hata of Gresham, whose parents live at the Minidoka Relocation Center, Idaho, was wounded in action on July 4.

PFC Hiromu Heyamoto, a graduate of Gresham Union High School, 1941, was wounded in action on the French front on October 20. His parents are in the Minidoka Center.

The newspaper item says that you plan to assist the Gresham, Oregon, Legion Post to erase the names of their American soldiers of Japanese ancestry.

What strange reasoning prompts you to strike at these heroes who are facing our enemy in deadly combat?

As a member of the American Legion and as a veteran of World War I, I know that your disgraceful act cannot be condoned by a vast majority of American Legionnaires, nor by the Lost Battalion rescued



in this war by Nisei, nor by Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark who cited the 100th Battalion of Nisei for bravery in Italy, nor by any fair-minded person who is able to make the distinction between the enemy and loyal Americans of many ancestries who are fighting the enemy.

You have betrayed the Legion by a deliberate insult to our Army, its uniform and the brave men who wear it. You have attempted to loosen the cornerstone of our Democracy by striking at one racial group of descendants out of the six nations we had declared war against.

You desecrate the grave of the Unknown Soldier. For neither you, nor any other man, knows but that sacred resting place may hold the remains of a descendant of any enemy nation. We had Japanese-American soldiers in World War I.

You should make haste to replace the names of the loyal American soldiers on the Hood River Honor Wall and confine your hate complex to the enemy Japanese rather than attempting to imitate the sordid attitudes of those we are fighting.

Sincerely yours,

R. B. Cossens  
Assistant Director



## THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S JAPANESE

An address by R. B. Cozzens, Assistant Director of the War Relocation Authority, before the Peace Officers of California at Salinas, California, October 9, 1945

As you may have read in the press, the War Relocation Authority will close the last of its centers except Tule Lake by December 15 and its West Coast offices a few months later. With so little time remaining for WRA activity in this part of the country, I am glad to have the opportunity to talk things over with you, the peace officers of California, because you are out in the front line of every community difficulty, seeking to help neighbor to settle differences with neighbor and trying to get people to live together in peace and mutual understanding.

That is no easy assignment. Probably in no other section of the country were the problems of maintaining orderly community life so complex as they were on the West Coast during World War II.

California was a front line state with the double duty of being ready for possible attack and at the same time preparing the implements of warfare -- the ships and the aircraft and the food that helped win the war.

With an influx of a million and a half workers from all states of the union, the funneling of Army and Navy personnel through our ports on the West Coast, the tensions of crowded housing conditions, war time regulations and restrictions, taut nerves due to overtaxed transportation facilities, and the unprecedented throwing together of people of varied racial ancestry all added further problems in maintenance of order.

Beyond this men of many states brought with them their many preconceived notions. They naturally were not also by some resentment on the part of those who considered themselves California's oldtimers.

We are familiar with the job that had to be done against a background such as this. There is not a top peace officer in the state who was able to retain his full complement of trained officers. Many older men were brought out of retirement to do what they could. Inexperience replaced experience. The duties of war and the lure of larger pay envelopes depleted your ranks.

But it will be recorded that most of the Peace Officers of California did a splendid job with intelligence and energy to maintain a cohesive statewide enforcement of law and order.

And now we face the post-war problems when tensions will be strained further by personal economic crises of some of the new groups in the state. These problems will come under the headings of race and color and in some cases even creed. Those of us who recognize the constitutional demands for political and economic equality of all men must also recognize that there are elements among us who adhere to a long-rejected doctrine that this is a white man's country. Our two-front war was fought to defeat the conflicting theories that this was a white man's world on the one hand or that it was a Japanese world on the other. Both theories having been blasted out of existence, it is assumed that we are now in a world that makes no color distinction. We saw and read and heard of men of many colors from many lands working toward a final solution of this problem in the two months' sessions of the United Nations Conference in San Francisco.

(more)





In WRA we realize that the return of the evacuees, following the actions of the War Department and the United States Supreme Court last December, created problems for some of you. There are whys and wherefores about the constitutional rights of these Nisei and Issei that you have to explain to some of the people in your communities.

Many of you of course know a great deal about persons of Japanese ancestry in California. They owned and operated farms and vineyards and stores in your home areas. Before they were moved away from the coast I am sure you found them generally orderly and law-abiding. Now I would like to tell you briefly something about what has happened to them in the three and a half years since evacuation, and in a little more detail give you a picture of the most recent developments regarding their return to the West Coast.

As you all doubtless know, the original evacuation back in the spring of 1942 was carried out by the Western Defense Command of the Army. It was the Army which moved these people from their homes, supervised their temporary maintenance in assembly centers, and finally transported them to the relocation centers of WRA. I stress these things because there has been a great deal of confusion, particularly in this part of the country, about who does what on this program, and I think it is important that the facts be kept straight.

The War Relocation Authority took over responsibility for the evacuees when they entered the gates of the relocation centers. Our job was spelled out for us only in the broadest kind of terms. But under the Executive Order of the President which established WRA we did have two principal assignments. The first was to maintain these people who had been displaced from their homes by governmental action -- in other words, provide them with temporary homes -- and the second was to provide for their ultimate relocation.

While the transfer of the people from Army assembly centers into WRA custody was gradually taking place in the summer of 1942, we determined that it was not wise to keep the evacuees in the relocation centers any longer than absolutely necessary. It was clear that they had committed no offense and that the overwhelming majority of them had no hostile intentions whatever toward the United States. To keep the whole group of them under indefinite detention in government centers, we felt, would not only be a step of dubious legality but -- even more important -- it would be definitely out of harmony with our most basic American traditions. The evacuee population contained thousands and thousands of youngsters of school age who were born in this country and who were entitled as citizens to full participation in all its institutions. That meant getting them out of the isolated, artificial atmosphere of the relocation centers and back into a normal American environment as rapidly as possible. The evacuee population also contained, among the adults, many thousands of skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers who were sorely needed in a time of nationwide manpower shortage and who could never make their maximum contribution within the remote and restricted confines of the WRA centers.

Because of these very real and very pressing considerations, we began in the summer and early fall of 1942 to place increasing emphasis on the relocation aspect of our operations. By early November, when the last contingent of evacuees was transferred from the Fresno Assembly Center into the Jerome Relocation Center in Arkansas, we had our relocation procedures fairly well worked out and were ready to start facilitating the gradual movement into formal communities and private employment. Throughout that first fall and winter only a few hundred evacuees actually left the centers for purposes of relocation, and the first real movement began in

(more)





the spring of 1943. From that time on we have steadily improved our techniques and our administrative machinery for helping these people to become reestablished so that today we are able to assist in the resettlement of more people in one week than we could handle in three or four months back in 1943.

There are several things that need to be said about this relocation work in order to clear up some misunderstandings that probably still exist. In the first place, we in WRA have never had any control over the movement of evacuees back into the Pacific Coastal area. This has always been entirely an Army matter, and as long as the Army exclusion orders remained in force, we had to concentrate our relocation efforts in the East, the Middle West, and the intermountain section. It was only last winter after the mass exclusion orders had been lifted that we established relocation offices in this region and began actively helping large numbers of evacuees to return to their former homes. Prior to that time the comparatively few evacuees who came back did so under special individual permits granted by the Western Defense Command.

A second point about our relocation work is that we have been helping people to relocate and not relocating them. Many times we have been asked whether our policies favor return to the Pacific Coast or resettlement to other sections of the country. The only answer we can give is that this depends on the choice of the individual evacuee. We can of course give advice to the evacuees and we do; we often point out the advantages of resettling in one section as compared to another. And we have tried consistently to encourage a widespread pattern of relocation across the entire country instead of a clustering up in any one community. But in the last analysis, the evacuees are not pawns on a chessboard; except for a few thousand who are still under Justice Department detention orders, they are free people who had the misfortune to be displaced from their homes through no fault of their own. As such, they are clearly entitled to resettle insofar as possible in the communities of their own choice and with some degree of government assistance in making the transition. This has been our policy all along, and I believe it is the only decent, and honest policy which the government could have followed.

A final point about relocation relates to the controls which have been exercised over the movements of these people since the time of evacuation. Up until last December we exercised controls of our own at the relocation centers, denying the privilege of relocation to any person whose record indicated that he might be dangerous to the national security. Then on December 18, after the West Coast mass exclusion orders were lifted, the responsibility for determining which evacuees were free to relocate and which ones were to be held in further detention passed to the War Department and Department of Justice. More recently, right after the signing of the Japanese surrender document, the War Department indicated that there was no need for further military control of the evacuees and the Army moved completely out of the picture. So, the Department of Justice is now the sole agency responsible for detention policies, and our job is almost purely one of relocation. However, we are of course continuing to detain at the Tule Lake Center those people who have been designated for detention by the Justice Department until such time as this group of people can be transferred to the direct custody of that Department.

Throughout this whole wartime period while their parents, families and friends lived in WRA centers, young Nisei entered the American Army, the first of them as volunteers and later others as inductees when they were again made eligible for selective Service in January 1944. You undoubtedly know of their valiant battle record in Europe. When the famous 442nd combat team of Japanese-Americans was chosen to lead the Fifth Army's V-J day parade in Leghorn, Italy last month, the selection





reflected more than recognition of the regiment's distinguished achievements. It was also, in effect, a reminder to a few nightriding hoodlums representing a few like-minded troublemakers in a few California counties, that the GIs were fed up with attempts to intimidate the parents and families of their Nisei comrades.

Let no one make any mistake about it, the GIs who have been around where the fighting was hottest can be counted upon to oppose discrimination against Nisei veterans and their families. Press dispatches from Europe about that V-J day parade in Leghorn said that the 442nd, which never had more than 4,500 men at any one time, had suffered a total of 9,000 casualties. This figure of course includes the replacements of the combat team, but many men were wounded two and three times. Other infantrymen who fought in the line with the 442nd, whether in Italy or on the Franco-German border, say simply, "It was a pretty rough outfit." There is a lot of GI meaning behind that phrase, "a pretty rough outfit."

Because of wartime security regulations, the story about Japanese-Americans fighting against the Japanese enemy in the Pacific is just beginning to be told. At the very least, three thousand have seen active service in the Pacific, many of them working in close cooperation with front line troops. They were assigned by the Army to the Marines on Iwo Jima. They were with Merrill's Marauders in Burma and with MacArthur's troops in the liberation of the Philippines. They moved in with American invasions during many other island campaigns including Eniwotok and Saipan.

A news correspondent writing from Okinawa tells their story better than I can. He writes, and I quote:

"The war in the Pacific would have been far more costly and thousands more American lives would have been lost had it not been for the Nisei -- Japanese Americans -- serving with U. S. Army.

"The 27th Division of the 10th Army here on Okinawa is prouder of its Nisei than almost anything else in its brilliant record. There are ten Nisei attached to every active Pacific division but the 27th's officers believe they got the best ten there were to be had. Their value to the division cannot be estimated in terms of the two Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars and a Distinguished Service Cross -- all awarded for varying acts of bravery.

"Lt. Col. William K. Van Antwerp, of the 27th Division, General Staff, told this reporter in an interview, "we would have been twice as blind as we were on these islands without the Nisei. They were able to break down fear and superstition and obtain vitally important information from both Japanese soldiers and natives.

"Without a doubt," Col. Van Antwerp declared, "our Nisei have saved many, many American lives."

Many of the stories of Nisei exploits have not yet been published. The writer, reporting from Okinawa concludes: "Men in the 27th Division will stare at you unbelievably when you tell them that there were some people and some newspapers in the U.S. that violently opposed the use of Nisei in the Pacific.

"'Are those people crazy?'" the soldiers will ask. "'Only God knows how many of us are alive today only because we had those marvelous guys with us,'"

Just about a month ago Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, who was then the Undersecretary, had something to say about the activities of the Nisei in the

(more)





Pacific theater and about the war record of Japanese American soldiers generally. I want to read you a few sentences from a letter which he wrote on September 6 of this year to Secretary Ikes:

"The record of the Japanese-Americans accepted in the Army is one of which we can all be proud. Between November 1, 1940, and May 31, 1945, we inducted 20,861 enlisted men of Japanese ancestry and 79 Japanese-American WACs into the Army. During the same period we commissioned 162 officers of Japanese descent...

"There was no use of Japanese-Americans in areas west of the main Hawaiian group, except those assigned to intelligence and language details. For this type of work, however, a considerable number was employed. At the time the war ended Japanese-American linguists were serving as officers and enlisted men in all Pacific areas. Many of them were cited for outstanding accomplishments.

"Language schools up to July 31, 1945, had trained and sent overseas 2,078 enlisted men of Japanese descent. As of that date, 717 were scheduled to be sent overseas in August and 1,156 were in training for future assignment. An additional 1,250 were being procured for such training.

"We feel that the record of those Japanese-Americans who were accepted for service in the Army or in plants and facilities having War Department contracts will compare favorably with the record of any other group. They have more than justified the faith which we placed in them."

Major General H. C. Pratt, commanding general of the Western Defense Command, in the revocation order of last December urged and insisted that those who were released should be -- to use his own words -- "accorded the same treatment and allowed to enjoy the same privileges accorded other law abiding American citizens or residents."

The record made on the field of battle by the Nisei in both the European and Pacific Theatres of War prompted the War Department to take extra steps to inform the West Coast of the contributions of the 20,000 American Japanese in American uniforms.

So far the War Department has sent four officers who worked and fought alongside the Nisei in the war to attest to the valor and loyalty of the Americans of Japanese descent.

Each of these officers asked for the assignments to the West Coast even though it meant delay in securing separation from the Army.

One of these is Captain George H. Grandstaff of Covina, California, who spent thirty days talking to service clubs and servicemen's club up and down the state, starting with his home business city of Santa Ana and concluding with the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco.

Captain Grandstaff had been a produce dealer in Santa Ana, had a vague feeling that he didn't care too much for people of Japanese ancestry before he entered the service. But when he fought and bled alongside them in Italy he -- and his fellow officers -- grew far, far fonder of American Japanese.

They read in the Stars and Stripes of discrimination, intimidation and open attacks on American Japanese at home and grew indignant over such acts. Grandstaff and his fellow officers talked the matter over many times in their dugout headquarters and decided that one of their number must make it his duty to straighten out this situation.

(more)





They selected Grandstaff and he willingly accepted the assignment, spending a thirty day furlough away from his wife and his mother to tour the small and large communities of California with a protest against discrimination.

Captain Thomas E. Crowley was another officer of the 442nd who was scheduled for discharge but who added sixty days to his career to make speeches against discrimination.

Lieutenant Roger Smith was still another who is at present touring the West Coast telling his story of Nisei loyalty and what it meant in Italy and France.

Those three came from the European sector.

A fourth Army officer is Lieut. Col. Wallace H. Moore, one of the chiefs of the Intelligence department in the South Pacific, under General Eichelberger. Col. Moore was a professor at the University of California up to 1940 when he was granted a leave of absence to join the Intelligence department in Washington a year before the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor.

He took the first contingent of American Japanese to the South Pacific and directed them in activities which hastened the end of that struggle.

If you wonder why our forces knew so much about the Japanese enemy and his movements you should hear Colonel Moore tell his stories -- stories of American Japanese who were landed behind enemy lines and who brought back information that saved many, many thousands of American lives, of translations made on the battlefield that brought about the slaughter of the Japanese enemy in various planned attacks and saved American lives, of the most dangerous and confidential missions made by the Nisei -- even in Japan itself.

The job in Japan is not yet completed. Some day the full story will be available and it will be a story of real Americanism. You may have noticed a recent film called "First Yank in Tokyo", a scenario about plastic surgery changing the face of an American Caucasian who went into Tokyo as a spy.

The first Yank in Tokyo didn't need any plastic surgery -- he and many of his kind had Japanese faces -- with American hearts and minds, with American courage and deep devotion to our Flag and our institutions.

It has been part of the WRA's war contribution to know many war secrets and to keep our silence for our country's security in the face of criticism in the early days -- criticism that ranged from being called "Jap lovers" from those who had been close friends to outright attacks from persons in high places who reflected on our patriotism.

At one time there was a planned program of telephone attack that was designed to frighten and intimidate our office girls. There were anonymous letters and open charges levelled against WRA employees.

There was a flagrant case near San Jose when a shot was fired into the home of a WRA relocation officer. In his home at the time was his daughter, the wife of an air force officer then in Manila. There were also two grandsons for whom he was caring.

One grandson's father was a lieutenant in the Navy and at the time engaged in action against the Japanese fleet. The other grandson's father was killed in action, as an air force officer in the first raid on Dueseldorf, Germany.

(more)



Well, that's behind us.

The situation has changed greatly.

Our records show that a year ago editorial and newspaper articles and letters to the editor were four to one in opposition to the return of the evacuees.

A check on a cross section of newspaper clippings during the month of September, 1945, show that these are now four to one in favor of the return of the evacuees and protection for them.

There used to be the cry: "Wait until the boys get back and you'll see how they hate the Japs."

Well, the boys are back and we have yet to see a letter to an editor from one of them that didn't protest the intimidation, arson and shooting directed against the evacuees. They protested discrimination against all minorities. They have made appeals from their hospital beds and on speaking platforms in defense of equality of all men.

Of course, we can't expect a perfect picture in race relations. We don't get perfection between Caucasians as your records undoubtedly prove.

In Auburn, California, a defense attorney in the Sumio Doi case, defended two AFJOL soldiers by stating that they had been taught to kill so it was reasonable that they would try to dynamite and burn down the Doi home. I do not believe that this type of defense is going to stand in the courts of justice if such attacks are made on Caucasians.

Personally I would like to see juries sitting in on these cases -- cases involving attacks on persons because of their race, color or creed -- such juries be composed of discharged veterans who had seen overseas service. They know what they were fighting for and what they were fighting against. They fought against forces of atrocity and persecution, they fought to bring racial equality and religious equality in other parts of the world and they don't expect to have to fight against it in their own country.

There's a rising tide of protest in this country against those who would establish secondary citizenship for one group of people or any type of minority.

Professor Rostow, professor of law at Yale, in a recent article in Harper's Magazine charges that the evacuation of Japanese and American citizens of Japanese ancestry was Our Worst Wartime Mistake. He reviews the situation in the light of its legal phases and says that the whole business is incredible.

The weight of scientific evidence, from the experience of American society in both our World Wars, is that the most important driving urge of race minority groups is to conform, not to rebel, says Rostow.

Of the 110,000 persons subject to the exclusion orders, 43 per cent were over fifty or under fifteen years old; they had lived in California without committing sabotage for five months after Pearl Harbor.

Apart from the members of the group known to be under suspicion, there was no evidence beyond the vaguest fear to connect the Japanese on the West Coast with the unfavorable military events of 1941 and 1942.

(more)





On the East Coast enemy aliens were controlled without mass arrests or evacuations, despite their heavy concentration in and near shipping and manufacturing centers.

I quote now:

"One hundred thousand persons were sent to concentration camps on a record which wouldn't support a conviction for stealing a dog," says the Yale professor.

Rostow further says:

"Three chief forms of reparation are available, and should be pursued. One reparation is the inescapable obligation of the federal government to protect the civil rights of Japanese Americans against organized and unorganized hooliganism."

That is what one outstanding legal authority thinks of California's American-Japanese problem.

As I indicated earlier, the WRA program is now entering the home stretch. Since the beginning of the year, when the mass exclusion orders were lifted, a total of 20,000 evacuees from Relocation Centers have returned to California. Right now we have less than 14,000 people left in the eight relocation centers other than Tule Lake which are still operating. Some of these evacuees are parents whose sons and daughters have already resettled in other parts of the country, and many of these older folks will probably move out to join their children. But I would estimate that about 75 percent of the people still left in the centers will return to the former evacuated area and that fully 10,000 of them will come back to California. When you add to these figures the number of people who came here before the revocation of exclusion under special permit from the Army and the number who have come back from midwestern and eastern localities since the beginning of the year, I think the final result after all the centers are closed can be predicted with a fair degree of accuracy. In my judgment about half of the original evacuee population will eventually be found back in the West Coast while the other half will be spread out clear across the remainder of the country.

For a time last spring when the incidents of terrorism were coming pretty thick and fast, we did face a definite uphill fight in helping the return movement of the evacuees into this section of the country. But as a result of some highly effective work done by a great many people, including several in this audience, I think the major battle has now been won. With a few scattered exceptions, the terrorists seem to realize that the forces of decency are no longer going to tolerate their atrocious activities and that no further flouting of our laws under the banner of racial discrimination will be permitted.

This does not mean, however, that the problems of the returning evacuees have been completely solved or that any of us can afford to rest on our laurels. There is still the continuing job of working patiently to eliminate the less violent forms of discrimination against the evacuees and of safeguarding their full rights as American citizens and as law-abiding aliens. And let's not forget that a great many of these aliens are not simply law-abiding people who deserve only to be tolerated; a very high percentage of them are the parents of some of the best combat troops in the American Army.

(more)



Some of these non-violent forms of discrimination which need further watching can be mentioned briefly. Throughout California generally there are a great many farm operators and other types of employers who have indicated that they want evacuee workers and are entirely willing to hire them on the same basis as anyone else. But in a few sections we still have recalcitrant employers who refuse to hire any person of Japanese descent regardless of his individual merits. Then there is also the occasional tendency toward discriminatory practice in the sale and rental of land, in the granting of business licenses, in the handling and marketing of farm produce, and in other lines of economic activity. Finally in a few communities we have had attempts at complete boycott of the entire economic life of the people returning from relocation centers. These boycotts will not stand up, I am confident. But none of us can afford to overlook them or dismiss from our minds the prejudicial sentiments that lie behind them.

Unfortunately we still have in this state, and in several others, a group of people who make their living or who try to make political capital out of that most un-American practice of creating a scapegoat. As a general rule these operators pick on some minority group and attempt to blame that group for all the ills of the community as a means of covering up their real economic or political interests. Frequently they are quite successful at it for a time and particularly in periods of local or national stress. But over the long haul, they generally find that scapegoating is neither a profitable nor a popular undertaking. In the United States it has never been considered good sportsmanship to pick on the little fellow when he's down. On the contrary, we take pride as a nation in our tradition of fair play for the underdog. This typically American feeling of resentment against those who push minority groups around seems to be especially strong among our combat veterans now coming back from battlefields around the world. And I feel sure that the boys who have fought beside the 442nd Combat Team in Italy, France, and Germany and the boys whose lives have been saved by Nisei operatives in the Pacific are not going to stand for the old-time brand of race baiting and discrimination that has flourished in the past. Already many of these veterans have spoken out on behalf of fair play for our Japanese minority, and their voices will certainly grow louder and more numerous in the months ahead.

As we look ahead to the immediate future, it is clear that the problem of helping the evacuees to resume their rightful place in our national life lies very largely in this section of the country. Our joint task is to assist in the peaceful integration and adjustment of a group of people who, generally speaking, have been cooperative and well disciplined. WRA does what it can, of course, in assisting these people through the immediate transition period right after they leave the centers. But there are many phases of the job which we are not equipped to handle and which have to be done by other public agencies or private groups. One of the most important of these is the task of protecting the elemental rights of the evacuees as citizens and law-abiding aliens -- the task of safeguarding their persons and their property against the attack of race baiters, hoodlums, and vandals. In a sense, this job is basic to all the others. Unless it is vigorously and skillfully carried out, all the efforts of WRA and other agencies can easily be nullified.

And that is the major reason why I was so pleased to meet with this particular group here today. It is vitally important that we understand each other's pro-

(more)





## Address by R.B. Cozzons-THE FUTURE OF AMERICA'S JAPANESE

bloms and that we continue working together in the closest kind of harmony. Relationships so far, with a few exceptions, have been very good. But I have long felt that they could be even better if I could meet with you face to face and explain just what it is that we are trying to accomplish, how we are going about it, and why we think the job is important for the democratic future of this country. I know that all of you are just as much concerned about that democratic future as I am and that you will leave no stones unturned, either in your official capacities or in your private lives, to see that it is not permanently poisoned by the venom of racial hate. Now that the war with Japan has ended, we can and we will write a final chapter to the history of our specialized wartime treatment of our Japanese minority. I earnestly hope that all of us will work together in making it a chapter of which this country can always be genuinely proud.

oOo





WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY  
Department of the Interior  
461 Market Street  
San Francisco, Calif.

Sacramento, Calif.  
February 26, 1946

ADDRESS BY ROBERT B. COZZENS  
Assistant Director, War Relocation Authority  
To Pacific Coast Section, American Society of Agricultural Engineers

At the outset I wish to explain that I can cover only a portion of the title of my talk "The Nisei Come Home" because of the complexity of this subject. I shall endeavor to cover the general problem and stress those phases of the Japanese-American situation as it relates to our agricultural economy.

As Assistant Director of the War Relocation Authority since its inception--four years ago--I have had a rare opportunity of reviewing the record as it pertains to the part played by Japanese Americans on our West Coast farm and orchard lands. I have also been able to review this subject with some familiarity due to my eight years experience with <sup>the</sup> Department of Agriculture.

There have been some hectic days in the WRA in carrying out the Presidential Executive Order. But now it appears that much of the war hysteria has been dissipated and some of the bitterness has disappeared. The time has arrived for an objective discussion of this subject on its facts.

This unprecedented war problem began when Lt. General John L. DeWitt, commanding general of the Western Defense Command, determined in early 1942 that a danger to the West Coast existed because of the presence of Japanese aliens and Americans of Japanese ancestry. A preliminary state of voluntary evacuation was ordered and when some 7,000 persons of Japanese ancestry responded by moving away from the coastal areas a new problem arose in the states to which they went. Acceptance in other nearby states was not warm as the voluntary evacuation was not too orderly.

The next step taken by the Western Defense Command was to set up a forced and so-called orderly evacuation with the establishment of assembly



centers and then relocation centers.

Citizens and aliens alike were taken from their homes and farms in an overnight move. The aged, infirm, women and children were included in this drastic order. Highschool students taken from their classrooms, and babies from orphanages were all placed behind barbed wire fences.

Prior to this -- within the few days following the attack on Pearl Harbor --approximately 3000 persons of Japanese ancestry were picked up by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as dangerous. Later 1800 of these were released, cleared of any suspicion. Because of the 1200 suspected of being too closely aligned to Japan, since 112,000 were swept from their way of living to be marked as suspicious. Some of these were members of the two American Legion Japanese posts in California, many with decorations for their contributions of valor in World War One.

Now it can be revealed that even the Japanese Language school of the Military Intelligence Language School of the United States Army was removed from the presidio of San Francisco to Minnesota because they too came under that general order. These Nisei student soldiers--first born Americans of Japanese descent--were later to break the veil of language secrecy in the South Pacific which contribution hastened the victory for our Army and Navy.

In the meantime parents, wives and children of Nisei soldiers were being moved to 10 selected sites where Relocation Centers had been established, two of which were in California.

These Centers were of populations ranging from 7000 to 19,000 persons--little cities in their own right. The housing was rough Army barracks type with little privacy for family life. All latrines, wash rooms and showers were in separate buildings provided for each block of barracks. Public mess halls were established with cafeteria feeding. Community activities, a city



council, Red Cross workers, Girl and Boy Scout groups, recreation, entertainment, schools and hospitals were provided in each center. Victory gardens were established close to the barracks buildings and larger farming enterprises developed on nearby acreage. The food grown in these WRA farms by the evacuees themselves was used on the centers and not permitted on the open market in competition with outside farm products.

Under Executive Order of President Roosevelt it evolved on the War Relocation Authority to do just what its name implied: relocate these people back in the main stream of American living. They were not accused of any crime nor convicted of any overt acts. Their detention was not intended to mark them as disloyal.

It was our job to assist them to relocate in any section of the United States with the exception of the military zone of the Western Defense Command-- a zone marked by the lower section of Arizona, all of California and the coast half of Oregon and of Washington states.

For nearly three years the Western Defense Command maintained a blanket exclusion order against their return, but granted individual certificates of clearance to several thousand in that period. Then in December, 1944, the blanket exclusion order was lifted and only certain individuals of Japanese ancestry were barred from returning to the West Coast. Simultaneously the United States Supreme Court ruled that these people could no longer be detained in Relocation Centers, and that they were free to move to any part of the United States -- including the West Coast.

We had already closed one of our ten centers on June 30, 1944 because of the thousands who had relocated in the east, mid-west and south. Approximately 35,000 had regained their constitutional rights prior to the lifting





of the general ban and since that time we have closed eight of the nine centers in eleven months time. One center remains in operation--Tule Lake, and only so because the Department of Justice is still screening persons subject to deportation. Tule Lake once had a population of 19,000. It is now down to 3200 with the number diminishing rapidly as Department of Justice screening progresses.

As you are well aware, a great deal of prejudice was whipped up against this racial minority, and it was part of our job to straighten out the thinking on this subject.

Many myths were built around them. It was said that they were all emperor worshipers. Yet we had every denomination of church in our centers, Catholic, the many Protestant religions and buddhist sects. A cross-section analysis showed that 55 percent were Buddhists, 30 percent Christian and four-tenths of one percent admittedly Shintoists, so-called Emperor worshipers. In the younger generation 50 percent were members of Christian denominations.

It was said they bred like rabbits and would soon outnumber the Caucasians. The Tolan Committee denied this with a statement that the birth rate of persons of Japanese ancestry in this country was not keeping up with the death rate. Their birth rate paralleled the national birth rate, 16 to 17 births to 1000 population per annum.

The Japanese language schools were under fire as hotbeds of Japanization of the younger generation. The United States Military Language School at Fort Snelling, Minnesota in a recent report said its investigations proved that the youngsters resented being forced to attend these language schools and in most cases developed sales resistance to Japanese customs and languages.

The Military Language School scraped the bottom of the barrel in securing Americans of Japanese ancestry who could talk, read and write the enemy language.



These Japanese-Americans, through their knowledge of the Japanese language, are credited with shortening the war and saving untold thousands of American lives. We are told now that a resumption of Japanese Language Schools is being sought by the Army because of possible future military necessities.

A week ago it was suggested that I compare the evacuation of these people from the West Coast to the attitude taken toward Japanese Americans in the Territory of Hawaii. There was no evacuation and no relocation centers were established on the islands. Instead these people were permitted to go about their business and contribute to the war effort. Instead of moving the 162,000 estimated population of persons of Japanese descent, 1100 were taken into custody and sent to our Relocation Centers on the mainland.

There was no single incident of sabotage on the islands, despite some of the wild stories of vegetable trucks turning into machine gun nests and moving down our soldiers as they rushed from barracks at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field. The authority for this fact is Police Chief Gabrielson of Honolulu, the late Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI. There was no incident of sabotage before, during or after the Pearl Harbor attack, Hollywood scenario imaginations to the contrary.

The military government in Hawaii determined that it was not necessary to remove the population of Japanese ancestry, or to confine that population to segregated camps. As a result the population was used for growing of food and fiber, maintaining a war time economy, building installations of the most secret nature, helping to win the war as American citizens and law abiding aliens.

For the most part--for the vast majority--the evacuees accepted their mainland detention as a contribution to the war. You may remember that



we did have some displays of emotion at Tule Lake, which were actually less serious in fact than they were in print. The confinement and the repression of being fenced in, restrictions in convenience, elimination of opportunities and the denial of normal freedoms must be considered as creating tensions. It is a matter of doubt that any other racial group confined under these conditions and in ~~/~~city-size numbers would have been as cooperative to regulation.

Industry within the centers was broad. In three centers a program of camouflage net making was a contribution that went directly to war. Another center was given plans and specifications of ships of the German and Japanese navy and miniature models were made of the enemy war ships. These were turned over to the Navy which used them as models for their air force attack pilots. Many a pilot familiarized himself with the outline and contours of his future targets through these models.

Selection of the sites of the centers considered farming opportunities to assist in the sustenance of the evacuees without drawing on the outside farm production. In nearly all cases it required subjugation of untried farming land, clearing of brush and rocks, building canals and irrigation ditches, turning over new soil.

The Manzanar Relocation Center was placed on land in the Owens<sup>NS</sup> Valley, property owned by the City of Los Angeles for its watershed requirements. This land, as you know, had once been farmed but had been abandoned to go back to its natural state. The evacuees at Manzanar grew every type of vegetable needed for the Center.

It was there also that experiments were made with guayule for the synthetic rubber program. Even machinery for extracting the rubber content was developed under the direction of an evacuee scientist.

The Centers raised their own poultry and hogs to assist in the support of the camps.





I repeat that none of these products saw the open market or went into competition with the outsider grower as produce.

Food was shipped from southern centers to the northern centers in the winter time and reciprocal shipments made from the northern centers late in the year.

The return of the people of Japanese ancestry to the West Coast means a resumption of their participation in farm and orchard activities. In the first place about half will return, the other half having settled in other parts of the nation.

The part they will play in future agriculture will be out by about the same ratio. The stoop labor of the past was largely among the older folks, as the younger generation was getting away from the farms. Death and enfeeblement has cut into the ranks of the oldsters and they are gradually disappearing.

Over our desk have passed the volumes of farming records and farming facts concerning this group of people. There is no such record of any other racial group in the country. A check, a recheck and a double-check have been made and the results are most revealing.

Adon Poli and Warren M. Engstrand of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics have a complete report in a recent issue of the Journal of Land and Public Utility economics. They have made an exhaustive study of the Japanese Americans in agriculture. Mr. Poli came from the BAE to the WRA to set up the machinery for this study and returned to the BAE to complete the studies and issue his report under the bureau's sponsorship.

These reports dispel the fictions that persons of Japanese ancestry were gobbling up West Coast land and controlling truck crops. The figures arrived at by these studies came from the most authoritative sources.



One source of data is the registration of farm operators that was conducted by the Farm Security Administration at the Wartime Civil Control Administration field stations early in 1942. Another source is a study made by the Property Survey Section which was part of WRA's evacuee property division. In this study a search of the official records was made in each county that had a significant pre-war Japanese population in order to determine the amount of property ownership by persons of Japanese ancestry and the extent and trend of changes in ownership.

Although Japanese farmers were a major factor in certain types of operations, they nevertheless represented a surprisingly small portion in agricultural enterprises in the three Pacific Coast states. The census shows in 1940 that there were 16,018 Japanese-operated farms--including leases--in California, Oregon and Washington, comprising just a little more than a quarter of a million acres. Although this is a sizeable figure it is only 2.2% of all farms in the area and less than half of one percent of the total acreage in farms. For California alone the figures were slightly higher, being 3.87% of the farms and 3/4 of 1% of the acreage.

Forty-five percent of the Japanese workers in the three states were engaged in agriculture in 1940. Principal farming enterprises were trucking, fruit, berries, grapes, nursery stock and poultry. Evacuee farmers were most prominent in growing the intensely cultivated crops such as vegetables and berries, being credited with the production of about 1/3 of these crops. In California evacuees grew 70% of the total acreage of all types of berries and 85% of all the acreage in strawberries.



Japanese operated farms on the West Coast were considerably smaller than other farms on the average. In 1942 the average size of evacuee-owned farms was 45 acres compared with over 200 acres for all farms.

With respect to tenure there was a very high percentage of tenancy among farm operators. In the evacuated area, approximately 70% of the land farmed by Japanese was leased and 30% was fully or partly owned.

The evacuation of Japanese from the Pacific Coast had a very marked effect on farm land ownership. WRA's evacuee property records show that on March 1, 1942, the day before the evacuation proclamation was issued, there were approximately 2300 separate Japanese ownerships of farm land in the area to be evacuated, totaling 80,000 acres. During the evacuation period which extended from March 2 to October 31, 1942, sales of farms by evacuees reduced the number of ownerships to 2100 with recorded interests comprising less than 70,000 acres of agriculture land.

The leasehold interests of Japanese farmers virtually passed out of existence with the evacuation. Substitute operators were found for 99% of the Japanese farmers who were evacuated, and in only a few instances were the leases kept available for the Japanese tenants to resume upon their return to the coast.

In spite of the very minor holdings relative to the total agricultural land in the area, the outlook appears to be for an even smaller participation in the future for persons of Japanese ancestry. The reasons for this include the unavailability of most of the land formerly operated by farmers





of Japanese ancestry under lease, the substantial reduction in the total quantity of land owned by Japanese-Americans, and the redistribution of the Japanese-American population throughout other parts of the United States which will probably result in a 50% reduction in the resident Japanese-American population on the Pacific Coast.

We cannot judge the number of Japanese-American veterans who, when they have all returned from the war, will decide to engage in farming. The total figure of Nisei and aliens in our Army, issued recently by the War Department is 12,000 from the United States mainland alone, including members of the Women's Army Corps. Like many veterans they may want to settle down on farm land.

There are still a few thousand in our Army doing yeoman service in intelligence and counter-intelligence in Japan. Recently a group of 11 Nisei WACs left San Francisco for Tokyo where their knowledge of the Japanese language will be invaluable to our occupation forces.

The sterling record of loyalty and courage of Japanese American soldiers during World War II is one worthy of your consideration. They were given the assignment of landing at the Anzio beach where the 100th Infantry Battalion suffered 900 casualties. They fought their way inland after those first delays and their blood mingled with the bloods of many ancestries in the soil of Italy. The 442nd Regimental Combat team, also composed entirely of Japanese Americans, with Caucasian officers, gave individual and unit contributions to the cause. Their only record of being AWOL were in cases where they were absent without leave from hospitals in order that they could join their buddies at the front.



The 442nd was shifted to France for the attack on the Vosges Forest region where they rescued the Lost Battalion of Texans who had been surrounded by the German enemy. They were again brought back to Italy where they spearheaded the final drive that broke the German hold on the north section of that country and which brought the Italian campaign to a close.

We find now and then a person or so who doesn't know of their contribution to the warfare in the South Pacific. The cloak of secrecy was kept over their activities because of military strategy in the Pacific. It wasn't until the war was drawing to a close that the stories of their bravery and loyalty were permitted to be revealed.

Japanese Americans were placed behind enemy lines from which they brought back valuable information. On one occasion they infiltrated the enemy lines and seized an entire Japanese communications system simultaneously with the landing of our main body of troops. They intercepted Japanese enemy messages, translated important orders, interrogated Japanese prisoners and gained valuable information.

One of the many instances was brought into the local newspapers recently when some hoodlums threw rocks in the grocery store window of Kyoto Nishimoto at Penryn. Nishimoto, it was then revealed, was a veteran of the war in the Pacific and had on one occasion talked 50 Japanese soldiers into surrendering, going into a cave after them. He had been on Guadalcanal and New Georgia and was behind the enemy lines in the Philippines--he aided in saving the lives of our own people. For this he won the Philippines Liberation medal. The people of Penryn say, and I believe them, that no resident of Penryn was guilty of the display of ingratitude shown by the rock thrower. They all know and like Nishimoto and whoever threw those rocks must have been a stranger in town.



These people are back, citizens and law-abiding aliens alike. It is our guess, I repeat, that not more than 50 percent of those who originally lived on the West Coast will return. There will be no more Little Tokyos or Japtowns such as we knew before the war.

The other half are spread throughout the United States, in New England, the Mid-west, the southern states and the Delta area, New Orleans, Alabama, Mississippi. A large number -- well in the hundreds -- have gone to work for the Seabrook Farms in New Jersey, the packing firm for Birdseye products.

Business and professional men have relocated in Chicago, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and New York.

Agricultural workers have settled in Utah, which has caused some criticism of WRA because in Utah they are getting much closer to the eastern markets. But there is no law in our land which prohibits a man of any race, color or creed, settling wherever he wishes. Only local intimidation and threats of violence, criminal violations of our civil code, can deter anyone of any ancestry from making his living where he finds it. The law enforcement officers of the West Coast with few exceptions, have protected these rights.

The rights of this minority have been reaffirmed by a host of outstanding citizens and officials of the West Coast. When the general exclusion ban was lifted Governor Earl Warren of California was the first to make a statement guaranteeing protection. Attorney General Robert W. Kenny and his State Department of Justice has investigated each case of discrimination and intimidation and the attorney general has counseled law enforcement officers to protect the returnees.





Mayors and police chiefs in our major cities have done standout jobs in enforcement of law and order.

The American Legion took a forthright stand when the ban was lifted; the Veterans of Foreign Wars had passed resolutions prior to the lifting of the ban demanding restoration of civil rights. The new American Veterans Committee of World War II has been consistently on the side of racial equality and in one western city have a post commander who is a Japanese American. The Legion has re-established two Japanese American posts in California.

Church groups of all denominations fought this thing through the war hysteria, maintaining the dignity of all men of all ancestries. Labor organizations have welcomed the Japanese Americans to membership.

The United States Navy posted at all of its West Coast installations more than a year ago a notice to its men to respect the constitutional rights of this minority and praised the contribution of their sons in the service.

The United States Army has sent to the West Coast five officers who have fought alongside the Japanese Americans to tell the stories of their contributions to our victory. Four of these were with the Nisei in the European theatre of operations, and one, Lieutenant Colonel Wallace H. Moore of G-2, under Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger in the South Pacific, has told of their exploits in defeating the Japanese enemy. All these officers were assigned by the War Department to straighten out the thinking of some small groups on the West Coast who have been giving a shabby interpretation of Nazi race superiority.



The War Department wants the rural sections to know that time and time again young men of Japanese parentage have proved their loyalty and that they and their families are entitled to every right and privilege accorded all human beings under our constitution.

Under the processes of freedom of enterprise we cannot deny one minority of its rights without endangering the rights of the next minority and from their go on up the scale to chaos.

Science and progress rejects untruths. I believe it will benefit all of us to consider the facts and to throw out prejudice and fiction.



## INDEX -- Robert B. Cozzens

- Agricultural Adjustment Administration, U.S. (AAA), 11
- Agriculture, U.S. Department of, 1-3, 11
- agriculture interests, 4
- Akagi, Ume, 69-70
- Amache relocation center, 17
- American Legion, 47
- Army, U.S. (War Department), 13, 15, 17, 25, 27, 30, 35-37, 40, 42, 46
  - 52, 57, 69
    - Corps of engineers, 6
    - 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 35
    - K-9 Corps, 69-72
- Barrows, Leland, 2
- Beck, Dave, 41-42
- beef industry, 17
- Best, Ray, 12, 30
- Bradley, General Omar, 27
- Brand, Harry, 58
- Brown, Edmund G., 72
- Burgheim, Col. J. H., 70
- Burns, Hugh, 62
- California Labor School, 72
- Clark, Tom C., 4
- Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, 58
- communism, 72-73
- Congress, U.S., 31-32
- Crocheron, B. H., 3
- Davies, Lawrence, 52
- Davis, Elmer, 11-12
- DeWitt, General John L., 5, 47
- Dies, Martin, 32
- Dies Committee, (House Special Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities), 32
- Duveneck, Josephine, 72-73
- Edington, Jess, 47
- Eisenhower, Milton, 1-2, 6-7, 11-12
- Engle, Clair, 32
- Erlanger, Mrs. Milton, 70
- Fair Play Committee (see Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play)





Firth, Vic, 62  
 Fisher, Galen, 65  
 Forestry Service, U.S., 2  
 Frayne, Pat, 31, 38, 40, 51-73

Gibson, Bob, 72-73  
 Gila relocation center, 15, 16, 17, 17a, 18, 23, 25-26  
 Glick, Philip, 23  
 Great Northern Railroad, 43  
 Greenock, Bob, 64

Harada, George, 56  
 Hatfield, George, 62-63  
 Hearst, William Randolph, Jr., 51  
 Hearst newspapers, 57-58  
 Heart Mountain relocation center, 17, 55  
 Hood River incident, 47-48  
 Hutchinson, Claude B., 3

Ickes, Harold L., 39, 46  
 Interior, U.S. Department of, 2, 39, 72  
 Internal Revenue Service, U.S., 45

Japanese Red Cross, 22-23  
 Justice Department, U.S., 4

Kenny, Bob, 66  
 Kido, Saburo, 4  
 Kingman, Harry, 64  
 Kingman, Ruth, 19-20, 64-66

labor unions, 41-44, 52, 62, 73  
 law enforcement, 66  
 Legislature, California, 62-63  
 Leonard, Hubert B. ["Dutch"], 44  
 Lion's Club, 58  
 lobbying, 6-7, 17, 30-32

Manzanar relocation center, 10, 17, 17a, 18-19, 24-26, 56, 57  
 Marine Corps, U.S., 56  
 Marshall Plan for Economic Cooperation Administration, 51, 73  
 Masaoka, Mike, 4  
 McKay, Douglas, 72  
 Merritt, Ralph, 10-11, 18  
 Mineta, Norman, 21  
 Minidoka relocation center, 17, 22, 28, 30  
 Myer, Dillon, 1, 9-12, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29-30, 32, 38, 42, 46-49, 52, 54



Navy, U.S., 6-7, 17a, 24, 45-46, 56  
New York Times, 52  
 newspapers, 30-31, 33, 34, 51-52

O'Dea, Eddie, 64  
 Office of War Information (OWI), 11

Pfaffenberger, Clarence J., 69-71  
 Poston relocation center, 21, 23-24, 50, 54  
 public relations, political, 6, 51, 54-56, 60-69

racial attitudes, 44-48, 50, 54, 58, 67-69, 73  
 Roosevelt, Eleanor, 23-24  
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 39, 66

Sacramento Star, 51  
 Sakota, Toshio, 43  
San Francisco Call-Bulletin, 51  
San Francisco Chronicle, 51-52  
San Francisco Examiner, 57  
 San Francisco Labor Council, 63  
San Francisco News, 51  
 Shelley, John F., 62-63  
 Smith, Eastburn, 15  
 Soil Conservation Service, U.S., 1, 11-12, 17  
 Southern Pacific Railroad, 43-44  
 State Department, U.S., 73  
 Stoltz, Hubert, 73  
 Sun Maid Raisin Growers Association, 10  
 Supreme Court, U.S., 60

Tanforan assembly center, 52  
 Teamsters Union, 41-43  
 Temoy, Jack, 62  
 Tolan Committee (House Committee on Interstate Migration), 4, 15  
 Topaz relocation center, 17  
 Tule Lake relocation center, 12, 17, 26-30, 49, 55

Union Pacific Railroad, 43  
 United Press, 51  
 University of California, Berkeley, 10, 34

Wallace, Henry, 3-4, 11  
 War Relocation Authority (WRA), 1, passim  
 war veterans associations, 17  
 Warren, Earl, 37-41, 60-61, 66  
 West, Florence, 64  
 Western Pacific Railroad, 13









The Bancroft Library

University of California/Berkeley  
Regional Oral History Office

Earl Warren Oral History Project

Dillon S. Myer

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY: THE DIRECTOR'S ACCOUNT

An Interview Conducted by  
Amelia R. Fry





Dillon S. Myer

011101 .5 rev

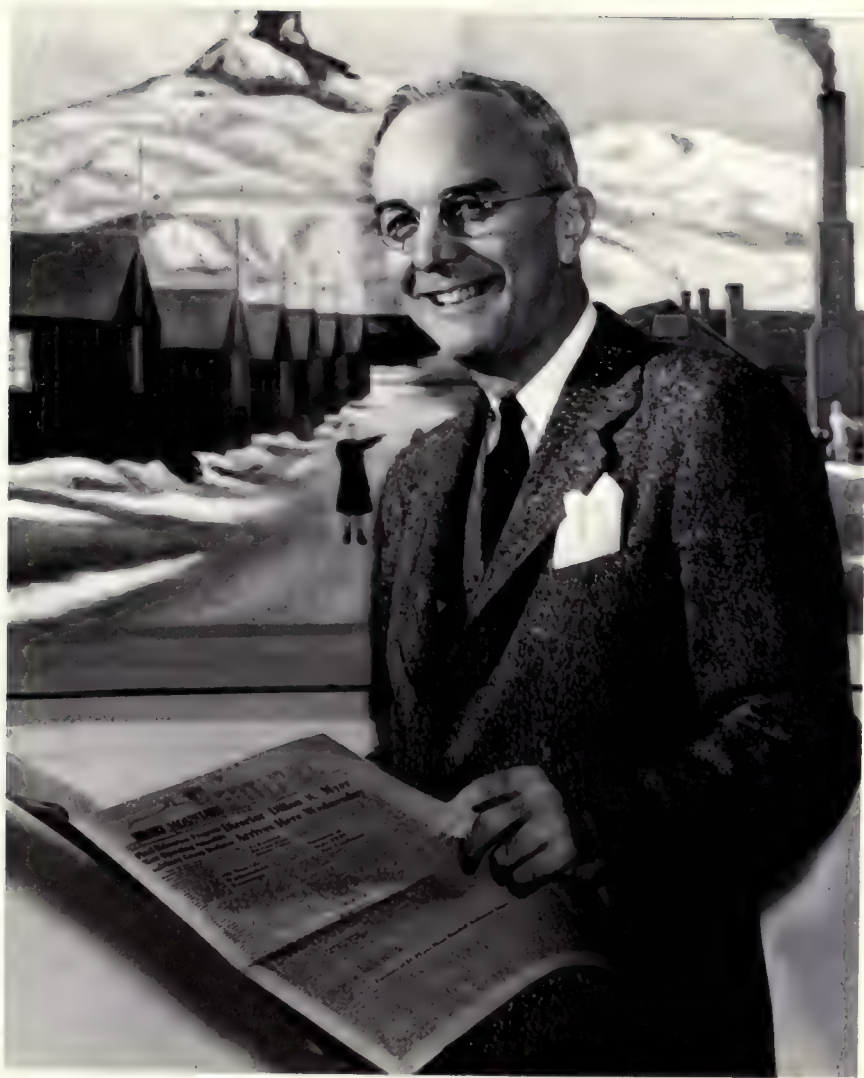






TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Dillon Myer

INTERVIEW HISTORY	1
I. THE EVACUATION	1
<u>Appointment as Director</u>	1
<u>Pressures for Evacuation</u>	4
<u>Earl Warren</u>	8
<u>Congressional Committees</u>	12
<u>Selection of Center Sites</u>	15
<u>Public Opinion and the Press</u>	17
II. THE RELOCATION CENTERS	20
<u>The Job Corps and Agricultural Work</u>	20
<u>Troubles in the Centers</u>	23
<u>Security and Law Enforcement</u>	24
<u>Legal Questions</u>	26
<u>Segregation of "Subversives" and Renunciants</u>	27
<u>The 442nd</u>	29
III. RESETTLEMENT	31
<u>Relocation out of the Centers</u>	31
<u>Public Relations and the Press</u>	38
<u>The American Legion</u>	41
<u>Opposition to Closing the Centers from People of Good Will</u>	45
<u>Opposition to Closing the Centers from Japanese-Americans</u>	46
<u>Opposition to Closing the Centers from Groups in California and Washington</u>	49
<u>Opposition within WRA and the Housing Problem</u>	52
INDEX	56



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

In June, 1942, Dillon Myer took on the task of directing the War Relocation Authority three months after it began, filling the chair vacated by his long-time Agriculture Department associate, Milton Eisenhower. Although not sympathetic to the evacuation, one does not (as he points out in his autobiography manuscript) "turn down a Presidential request during wartime."\*

In the thirties, Myer had been promoted from county agent to the Washington Office of the AAA in the Department of Agriculture; 1935 saw him move to the Soil Conservation Service as Chief of the Division of States Relations and Planning. That he was a trusted and recognized administrator no doubt had much to do with the request that he head up WRA. It was a reputation that continued long after the return of the Japanese-Americans to their homes, for in 1946 he was offered the governorship of Puerto Rico, which Truman felt needed an effectual administrator, and which Myer turned down. He did go on to other large challenges: Commissioner of Federal Public Housing Administration (1946), and Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1950).

This interview was held in order to more fully explicate the chapter on the WRA in his autobiography.\*\* He came to the University of California governmental relations office in Washington, D.C., on November 6, 1969, where we were given a quiet room in which to tape. His opening premise was his almost total lack of preparedness to run WRA, the job itself unheard of in this country, and his prior lack of contact with Japanese-Americans, since he had grown up as a farm boy in Ohio. "I didn't have any original opinions about it excepting that I believed in the Bill of Rights . . . what I used to call our endpost to hook our fence to," he said (page 4). The rest of the interview became a fascinating if ironic case history of how civil liberty principles could function within a larger framework that had essentially denied them. It was not without eventual help from informed civil libertarians on the outside, the ones he calls "the goodwill people."

---

\*Myer, Dillon S., "An Autobiography of Dillon S. Myer," Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, 1970, 409 pages.

\*\*op. cit., pages 183-225.



We taped for half a day, and at times it was emotionally wearing for this gentle and astute man. He fully re-lived the torments of the time: the bossy harassment from insensitive army officers, the postponements of the lifting of the evacuation order, and his own confrontation with the American Legionnaires in Hood River, Oregon, who were planning to remove the names of Japanese-Americans from their war memorial monument.

Mr. Myer's day of hard labor at the tape recorder was only a beginning. He went over the transcript with great care, filling in where sound was not clear and checking for accuracy. Later, he arranged and assisted in another interview with James Rowe (who handled some of the negotiations for the Justice Department in 1942) and also checked over his own part in that transcript. Similarly, he served as an entree to Japanese-American Citizens League advocate Mike Masaoka, and he continued to advise and expedite whenever his assistance was needed.

When his book on the Japanese-American internment, The Uprooted Americans (University of Arizona Press, 1970) was published, he deposited the original uncut draft in The Bancroft Library, where his autobiography can also be found.

Amelia R. Fry  
Interviewer-Editor

17 May 1974  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California at Berkeley





(Date of Interview: November 6, 1969)

## I THE EVACUATION

### Appointment as Director

- Fry: You mentioned to me earlier that you and the Milton Eisenhowers were very close, and although he was appointed the first director of the War Relocation Authority on March 19, 1942, and you didn't take over until June 17, you were fairly close to WRA during this period. Would you mind telling about this?
- Myer: Milton Eisenhower and I both lived in Falls Church, Virginia, and we were members of the same car pool. As a consequence, after Milton took over, I got a fill-in almost every morning that he was in Washington, and did advise on some of his appointments. And in particular, he asked me about Leland Barrows, who was the executive officer. And of course, he had John Province, who had worked with me; Philip Glick, Elmer Rowalt, who became his deputy director, whom I'd known since college, and who had worked with me in the Soil Conservation Service. E.J. Utz, who had been one of my county agents in Ohio and then worked with me in the Soil Conservation Service, headed up the division of Property, Agriculture and Engineering in WRA. So that I knew all the people on the key staff in Washington when I moved over, excepting two. One of them was Colonel Erle Kress, who was assigned from the Army. The other one was Tom Holland, who had come from one of the other government agencies, and I hadn't met him until after I joined WRA. I also learned later, by the way, that Milton talked with his staff before he recommended me to the President, and they all agreed they wanted me to come over.
- Fry: Oh, that's nice. And these were all agriculture --
- Myer: All of them with the exception of two.
- Fry: And during this three month period, you were still with the Agricultural Conservation and Adjustment Administration?



Myer: That's right.

Fry: Which was sort of an anomalous organization. And you were unhappy with that according to your autobiography. \*

Myer: I was very unhappy. This was an organization established by Secretary [Claude Raymond] Wickard on the 15th of December just after Pearl Harbor, and he announced it in the newspapers without saying anything to either "Spike" Evans or myself, who were to head it up. It was an idea, I'm sure, of Sam Bledsoe and Bob Shields, two of the Secretary's assistants. Evidently they got their heads together and decided this was a good way to get the organizations dovetailed or joined up and intermingled, which they wanted done, between the Triple A [Agricultural Adjustment Administration] and the Soil Conservation Service and so on. Well, they picked the wrong man to do that because I just wasn't going to do it. So I had to sit that out from the middle of December until the 17th of June. And incidentally, they put that agency to sleep about a month or two after I moved over from it.

Fry: Well, from your car pool conversations and your Saturday night get-togethers with Eisenhower, could you comment on Eisenhower's attitude toward this, why he took this job in the first place?

Myer: He was pushed into it. He didn't want the job. He had had a temporary assignment in which the Bureau of Budget had asked him to do some writing work for the President and the Bureau of the Budget. And Harold Smith, who was head of the Bureau of the Budget, was a very persuasive chap. He was the one that decided that Milton Eisenhower was a good man to head it up because he had worked with him recently. And I'm sure he recommended him to the President, and then the President poured the heat on. It was war time. It was the only reason he took it because it was not his kind of job. He was capable, of course, and he had demonstrated that throughout the years. He didn't want it. He didn't like it, from the beginning. And as a matter of fact, he became ill during the two or three months that he was director because it worried him. And on the evening that he talked to me about taking it over, on the 15th of June, he told me that I should take it if I could sleep at nights, because he couldn't. Milton was a very, very sensitive public relations man, and he didn't like to make tough decisions and incur the ire of anybody. And consequently, this was the kind of thing that just wasn't to his liking at all.

---

\* Myer, Dillon S. "An Autobiography of Dillon S. Myer," typed transcript of a tape-recorded interview, University of California at Berkeley, The Bancroft Library, Regional Oral History Office (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 180-182.



- Fry: And you saw this as a way of getting out of your own uncomfortable situation --
- Myer: No, no, no.
- Fry: And you also felt that you were tough enough to do it?
- Myer: No, I didn't see it as a way of getting out. It was a bad situation, but -- I wouldn't have picked this challenge at that stage. But here again the war was on, Milton and I had been very close, and he'd been helpful to me throughout the years that I'd been in Washington. As a matter of fact, I think Milton was partly responsible for my becoming Assistant Chief of the Soil Conservation Service. I think he recommended me for that job, but I didn't find out until a good many years later; I'm sure it's true. So I felt a good deal of loyalty to Milton at that time, and I knew that he was in a bind and that he didn't like it. So after talking it over for about two hours, he asked me if I would take it, and I said, "Do you think I should?" And he said, "Well, if you can sleep at nights, yes; I can't." So I said, "All right, I'll take it." Just like that. That part didn't bother me. I had learned to sleep at night with my worries.
- Fry: Which part didn't bother you? You mean the opposition?
- Myer: No. All of the problems that you had to face. After all, these people were Japanese. The emotions against the Japanese were great. We didn't anticipate of course at that stage all of the opposition that was going to continue out on the coast on the part of the people who pushed for the evacuation. We assumed that that would pretty well settle down. It didn't; it got worse. V.S. McClatchy, the Legion, the Hearst Press, Los Angeles Times and so on, continued the battle right up to the end, you know. I learned a lot about myself and a lot of other people during that period. Those first two years were kind of tough, '42 and '43.
- Fry: Yes, well, you didn't have much experience from anybody else to go on.
- Myer: Absolutely no precedent.
- Fry: No precedent at all in the United States.
- Myer: No precedent whatsoever. And of course I didn't know any Japanese. The only Japanese that I ever remembered knowing before I took this job were two boys that were in my class in the College of Agriculture at Ohio State University in 1910-14. And I didn't





Myer: remember ever meeting any others in the interim period. So I had to start from scratch in many ways.

In a way that was good because I came in, fortunately, with an open mind. I didn't have any original opinions about it excepting that I believed in the Bill of Rights and that guided us all the way through our program. We used that as our anchor, what I used to call our endpost to hook our fence to.

Fry: Your what?

Myer: Our endpost to hook our fence to. [Laughter] Farm boy, you see, I use the kind of similes that come from a farm boy's life. You know, they used "deadmen" on end posts. You know what deadmen are?

Fry: No.

Myer: Well, you use a great big post and put strips about six inches wide and three feet long on each side near the bottom. You dug a wide hole, so that it was solid, you see. When you put it in, it helped to hold it solid. So an endpost was something that you learned was a solid sort of thing that you hooked your fence to.

Fry: And the Bill of Rights was that to you.

Myer: The Bill of Rights was my endpost.

Fry: Well, that was a difficult endpost to use when you had an assignment like this.

Myer: No, it wasn't. No, no, no. It was just exactly what we needed. After all, we believed in every citizen having his day in court, and all the kind of opportunities that the Bill of Rights stood for.

#### Pressures for Evacuation

Fry: What part did the agriculture interests play on the coast? I thought that some of those were pretty active. There was the Western Growers' Protective Association.

Myer: Yes. And McClatchy's Joint Immigration Committee -- the Grange, and the Farm Bureau, were represented on that. And of course the Attorney General was, before Warren [Ulysses Sigel Webb]. I don't think Warren ever served on it. At the time they organized,



- Myer: the American Legion, and of course, some of these other organizations. McClatchy headed it up. He was the one who organized it way back in the 1920s when he planned to carry the battle for the Exclusion Act. And it stayed in existence right up until 1938 when he finally passed away. He beat the tom-toms. And then of course the McClatchy papers continued to carry the battle all through our WRA days.
- Fry: Did the Kiwanis and Lions form any kind of a supportive group very early in order to pressure for removal of the Japanese?
- Myer: Not that I know of. I don't think the Lions -- well, they may have. I don't know. But generally I don't think the luncheon clubs entered into it very much.
- Fry: Then there was a radio commentator, very early in the game --
- Myer: John B. Hughes.
- Fry: John Hughes, yes, who was he?
- Myer: Well, he was a commentator out on the west coast on the radio. I don't know who he represented at that time. But he, in January of 1942, went on the air and kicked off the big push toward evacuation.
- Fry: That was really quite early.
- Myer: Yes, it was early in January, shortly after the turn of the year. Things had been very quiet through December, there wasn't too much opposition to the people who became evacuees, Japanese-Americans. They lived quietly. They were frightened, of course, and there were some rumors such as poisoned food, and that sort of thing, which even the Los Angeles Times checked into and said was all bunk. So for about a month, things were quite calm, and then Hughes urged the evacuation and the hate groups really began to beat the drums. The Congressional contingent, Leland Ford, and some others started yelling at the top of their voices. And of course the Immigration Committee that we've already mentioned started whooping it up, the growers and shippers and the packers, the people who wanted to take over. And they did take over.

You see, the Japanese people, particularly in the southern part of the state, had handled most of the fruit and vegetable production and marketing program. They had most of the business, you see, in Los Angeles and the surrounding area, and a lot of shipping business. Well, these growers and dealers of course were itching to get their hands on it, and they did. After the war



- Myer: was over and the evacuees went back, they never recovered that same kind of hold on the business. A lot of people were too old by that time to go back and start over, and a lot of them who leased land couldn't get the leases back and consequently they didn't have the volume that they had originally. This was one of the sad things about evacuation, as far as business and the economy of the Japanese-Americans were concerned. These old people who had drudged all their lives and finally had arrived where they were doing pretty well with their fruits and vegetables were knocked out of business. Some of them got back in, but I'm talking about the bulk of them who didn't get back in because they didn't own land.
- Fry: Yes. You say the old people. What about the middle-aged ones too?
- Myer: There weren't very many middle-aged. You see, most of the Issei came here in the 1890s -- before 1910.
- Fry: Before the Exclusion Act.
- Myer: Well, but even before that, the Japanese agreed to cut down on the number of people they allowed to leave, you see, by 1910. There were some that came between 1910 and 1920, the picture brides for example, but there weren't very many men, laborers, who came in during that period. 1924, of course, cut it off completely. So that anybody who was in our centers, excepting for a few students and treaty merchants who were allowed to come in, had been here since early 1900 or maybe in the 1890s. Most of the Nisei were born between 1910 and 1924, so most of them were youngsters under thirty, and we had a lot of kids in the centers, of course, in 1942. Most of them were born between 1910 and 1935. There was just a sprinkling of Nisei who were over thirty-five years of age. Most of them were between eight and twenty-five -- high school age for the most part at that time. Now, of course, there were a few like Mike Masaoka and others who were very mature. In their thirties, early thirties. But there weren't very many. And, of course, any Nisei over forty was unheard of at that time, unless they had migrated from Hawaii.
- Fry: So the on-going farms did belong to Issei, essentially, or were leased by Issei.
- Myer: They were leased by Issei for the most part because of the alien land law.
- Fry: The Issei were the most vulnerable, too.





- Myer: Oh, yes, because the California Alien Land Act prohibiting their owning land, you see, was passed in 1913. So a lot of them hadn't arrived at a stage where they could have bought land before that time. Some of them had, but a lot of them then bought land in the names of their youngsters.
- Fry: They couldn't have the protection of citizenship, then, either.
- Myer: They couldn't have the protection of citizenship because they never had been eligible for citizenship. Did you know that the orientals generally, including the American Indians, had not been eligible for citizenship since George Washington was President?
- Fry: No, I didn't know it had been that long.
- Myer: It runs way back to the 1790s.
- Fry: Well, I begin to get sort of a feeling here for the political situation because the agriculture interests were probably the strongest political faction in the state of California at that time.
- Myer: Probably so. They and the American Legion.
- Fry: So you had some pretty strong political forces working against any sort of tolerance --
- Myer: [Laughter] We did. And, of course, I had to learn this. I was a mid-westerner and an easterner and I had no contact with California excepting what little I had after I became a member of the staff of the AAA and Soil Conservation Service in the 30s. And even then we didn't have too much contact with the political elements in California. We did get a Soil Conservation District Act passed, and I learned a little about it at that time, but nothing in reference to this anti-orientalism. Let's put it this way, I did know, because as a kid, as I grew up, I used to read magazine articles about the sneaky houseman and the Yellow Peril, and so on. They put this propaganda out for years and years and years, but I didn't know who was doing it. I found out during the war.
- Fry: Who?
- Myer: Oh, the Native Sons of the Golden West, McClatchy and his immigration group, and all of the forces that had combined to rid themselves of the Japanese and the Chinese. This all started with the Chinese, you see, because there were too many Chinese that were coming in.



Myer: They got the Chinese Exclusion Act passed way back in 1882. Then it rode along, and they needed more labor, so they began to let the Japanese come in after Commodore Perry opened up things in Japan. And the Japanese came along and when they began to be interested in buying some land and going on their own, the pressure began, you see. It was all right as long as they did day labor and were immigrant labor, but it was something else again when they began to move into business for themselves.

So I had to learn. About the California American Legion, the Immigration Committee and the Hearst press and about Earl Warren. About all the various elements in that situation. And I learned the hard way because, as I have said earlier, we had assumed that once the evacuation was complete, or had been announced and was over, that we wouldn't have too much of a public relations problem during the war on the west coast. But our major public relations problem was on the west coast. And they carried the battle all the way through.

#### Earl Warren

Fry: At the time this was going on -- early '42 -- Earl Warren was Attorney General?

Myer: Earl Warren was Attorney General, and he was running that fall, 1942, for the Governorship. I don't know when your inauguration is out there. As I remember it, he was inaugurated in January of 1943. So he was Attorney General during the period of the pressures for the evacuation. He was, I think, part of the pressure.

Fry: Warren was very close to both the McClatchy interests and the American Legion.

Myer: That's right. They had signed up a lot of people, you see, right after World War I as members of the American Legion, and unfortunately, they had a bunch of veterans who were ready to take over. And it became a very, very strong political element in the California situation. And Earl Warren knew this.

Fry: Did you have any sense of which pressure groups Warren participated in at the time?

Myer: Well, I'd say the major one was the Law Enforcement Officers. The Attorney General in California, as you know, really heads up the law enforcement group, the local police and sheriffs.



Fry: He co-ordinates all the local groups.

Myer: That's right. And they had a meeting. Let's see. Conference of sheriffs and district attorneys on the Japanese problem was held on January 30th, 1942. He participated in that. And made some comments following it. He said, of course, that it was a problem the military ought to handle. He had begun to duck by that time. But he continued to be in touch because shortly before General John L. DeWitt sent forward his recommendation dated February 13, he and Mayor [Fletcher] Bowron had a conference with DeWitt. Bowron came out of the conference and he said he thought everything was going to be all right, you know, on their side. Likely to be an evacuation. DeWitt decided what he was going to recommend, you see, and that's what Bowron reported to the press.

Fry: I found something here last night in Katcher \*, and I thought if I read this to you, it might bring back to you some of the things Earl Warren was saying. Katcher quotes him on page 148, "After Warren was elected Governor, he continued his battle against the Japanese, often in conflict with changing opinion in Washington concerning their loyalty. Yet a contradiction continued in what Warren said and did. Almost at the same time Warren was saying that the return of the Japanese to California could be a 'body blow' to national security, and claiming that the evacuation 'saved our state from terrible disorders and sabotage,' he could make an address at a ceremonies marking 'I am an American Day,' in honor of newly naturalized citizens and say, 'Citizenship . . . seeks little in return . . . except . . . toleration toward others. . . .' The limit of Warren's tolerance still was determined by pigmentation."

Myer: I don't think it was a matter of pigmentation so much. He did make this kind of statement. No doubt of it. But I think it's a matter of the particular California stand, which has been in existence throughout years, against the orientals. After about 1906. You see, the Native Sons of the Golden West, which had been in existence since 1875, started out on a campaign on the danger of the Yellow Peril. And they beat the drums, and then McClatchy, of course, and the American Legion joined in, 1918 or '19. At their very first meeting they passed a resolution. Well, by that time, 1942, of course, the American Legion had come to have tremendous political impact in California. And Earl Warren, of course, being a young man coming up, followed the Legion line pretty much all the way through. So, as I say, I just can't believe that Earl

---

\* Katcher, Leo. Earl Warren: A Political Biography (New York: McGraw-Hill), 1967.





- Myer: Warren worried about pigmentation. I think he honestly kidded himself into believing that there was a real danger because we were at war with the Japanese, and he agreed with General Dewitt and others. It's a very hard thing to describe.
- Fry: Now, he talked with Tom Clark right at the beginning -- \*
- Myer: Oh, sure.
- Fry: And Tom Clark was supposed to have convinced him, too, that all this was constitutional?
- Myer: I don't know what Tom Clark said to him, but I do know that Tom Clark weaseled all the way through, while he was out there. He was on the side of those that he thought were the angels at that time, which was DeWitt and Warren and others, and was sympathetic. He never bucked them, which was pretty bad. Because after all, he was working for the Department of Justice and representing them out there. It was terrible.
- Fry: His boss [U.S. Attorney-General Francis Biddle] didn't hold that view at all.
- Myer: No. No. He wasn't too strong either. Not that he didn't hold the opposite view; he did, but he wasn't much of a fighter.
- Fry: Well, I guess in Warren's mind it was essential that this be a constitutional move and a legal move.
- Myer: Oh, sure, being the kind of a lawyer he was, of course, he felt it was essential. You see, cases were already being filed, by that time, trying to get the evacuation declared unconstitutional. And unfortunately it wasn't. Well, we didn't get the Supreme Court decision until the evacuation order was lifted, you see, at the very end of 1944.
- Fry: And you needed it right away, before the evacuation.
- Myer: We needed it immediately.
- Fry: In the record of Earl Warren's speeches, which is about the only public record of his stand on this we have access to at the present time, he kept up his attacks on the Japanese and hammered home the necessity of keeping them interned at least a year after you were

---

\* Tom C. Clark then coordinator of the Alien Enemy Control Program for Western Defense Command. Later U.S. Attorney-General and Supreme Court Justice.



Fry: head of WRA and maybe longer than that. Now Leo Katcher says that he kept it up all during '43 and '44.

Myer: Well, I don't know. The only one that I remember was at the Governor's conference in Ohio. Now when was that?

Fry: That was June of 1943.

Myer: Well, that's the last one I remember. That was the year after I came in. And it's the only important one as far as I was concerned, that was publicized nationwide. Now he may have during his campaign and following his election as Governor, he may have made speeches in California in which he supported it. This, of course, was the American Legion line, and he was following them very closely. But June of 1943 was the last statement against the evacuees to my personal knowledge.

Fry: I have in my notes that in December of '44, Earl Warren was informed that the Japanese will be returned.

Myer: I'm sure he was --

Fry: What reaction did you have?

Myer: Very good. I don't remember when I first visited him, but I'm sure that on the first trip I made to the west coast after the evacuation order was lifted, we went to Sacramento and saw the Governor. And we got a very open-armed reception with him. I mean, we were shown in, and we got on first name basis very quickly, and from that time on we had no trouble with Earl Warren. Whenever we asked him to say something about what was going on in certain communities to oppose the evacuees' return, he said it. We'd get quotes from him, you see, we'd put out to the press.

Fry: Were you expecting that kind of reception from Earl Warren?

Myer: Yes, I was, because Bob Cozzens\*, who was our San Francisco representative at that time, knew Earl Warren. He'd known him throughout the years. And he said, "I don't think you're going to have any trouble with Earl Warren." And Bob, I think, may have been there before I got there, and had already seen him. I don't remember much detail about the meeting except that it was most friendly. I went to talk with him mainly to get acquainted with him, one, and two, to tell him what our plans were for relocation. We were setting up offices at that stage of the game, you see, all over California, to help people get settled, and I told him I'm sure that we were probably going to need some help from time to time. We would need him to speak up if things happened

---

\* See interview with Robert B. Cozzens, this volume.



- Myer: that shouldn't happen. And we'd like his support. And he told me he'd be glad to hear from us, and did give support every time we asked it.
- Fry: You did have to ask him for statements of support for press releases?
- Myer: Well, things came up that we knew about that maybe even he didn't know about. We'd let him know and tell him what we wanted, and he'd give us a statement we could put out and we could quote him in the press, you see.
- And, of course, the die was cast and Earl knew it, and he was a good enough politico to accept it. And he did a very graceful turn-around. Very graceful. This is why I say to anybody that asks me about an apology from Earl Warren that they're off on the wrong foot, because Earl Warren had the good grace to turn about and help get the job done out there, plus the fact that he became a great liberal judge on the Supreme Court, and I think this was a part of it.
- Fry: You think this was a part of his education, you mean?
- Myer: I don't think there's any question about it. And his conscience. I think when he looked back on the whole thing, he realized when he moved on to the Court, here was an opportunity to show the world that, after all, he was not a bigot.

#### Congressional Committees

- Fry: All through this, you had a lot of committee harassment. I think Warren had to testify earlier for the Tolan Committee, the House Committee on Interstate Migration?
- Myer: It wasn't harassment.
- Fry: And that was before you even took office.
- Myer: Yes, it was, but it was too late to stop the evacuation. John Tolan was a nice chap, a very wonderful fellow, and he was hoping to help. As a matter of fact, Jim Rowe,\* of the Justice Department, needled Tolan into taking on this committee and trying to do something about it because he saw the trend of things. Well, Tolan tried, but it was too late, and of course, practically everybody that testified before his committee was on the wrong side of the fence as far as we were concerned. And he tried to temper things.

---

\* See interview with James Rowe, Jr. this volume.





Myer: Lou Goldblatt was the only one of the labor boys in San Francisco who testified and he did a beautiful job before the Tolan Committee. And Mike Masaoka, of course, appeared before the Tolan Committee, but they were about the only two that appeared before the committee that really did something about it.

Mike finally said, "If there is to be an evacuation because of military necessity, we would have to go along, but if it's because of economic pressures or other reasons, we could not go along." So the Tolan Committee was set up with the idea of helping on the side of the angels, let's put it that way, but it came too late, and it didn't work. Of course, a lot of people at that time in California where the emotions had been stirred -- the radio and everybody else, you see, was on the wrong side, to the point where people who felt strongly about it on the other side, few of them had the courage to come out and testify.

Fry: Well, in May of 1943, when Mrs. Roosevelt came out, you were able to take your problem to the President and try to get the whole thing -- the evacuation -- rescinded.

Myer: Well, no, we didn't talk much about that at that stage. I told him about it, yes, but we didn't pressure him on that. My main problem then was "Happy" Chandler in the Senate Committee. And this was before the Dies Committee came into the picture and they were pestering us, you see, for transfer to the Army. And when I brought up the "Happy" Chandler thing, Roosevelt said, "I think I can help you on that." And he did. Through Senator Joe O'Mahoney. Joe O'Mahoney called Chandler in and gave him hell.

Fry: He was a Congressman?

Myer: He was a Senator from Kentucky. And he was set up as the sub-committee chairman to handle this business. Mon Wallgren, who had been Governor of Washington, before he was Senator, introduced the Legion's bill to transfer us to the War Department, you see, the whole WRA business. And we knew enough about the Army at that time that we didn't want it done. Not that we wanted to handle it, but we didn't want it done by the Army. And we had a terrible go-round in our first meeting and fortunately before that hearing was over was when Henry Stimson announced the plans for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team on January 28, 1943. This was in later January, you see, of '43, we had this first hearing with Chandler and his group. And Wallgren was the bad guy in that one.

Fry: Oh, I see, then there was another hearing in May and June, then, right after you saw Roosevelt?



Myer: These hearings were with the Dies Committee. Homer Chaillaux, who was head of the Americanism Committee for the American Legion was one of the biggest thorns in our flesh. He was, of course, executive officer. He was a Californian, by the way. Homer Chaillaux told Clarence Pickett of the Friends' Service Committee and bragged about this, that the Senate committee under "Happy" Chandler didn't do what they wanted done, so they got the Dies sub-committee to do the job. So you see, Dies then appointed Costello, John Costello of Los Angeles, as chairman of that committee, and we had to deal with it over a period of months. They started out in April, or May. They had their investigators at Manzanar and some of these other centers with no previous notice.

And this was one of the joyful things that happened because when I heard they were there I asked the Project Directors to take transcripts of everything that happened. And I found out that the center directors knew what the policies were because they all told the same story. And they sent a congressman from New Jersey, J. Parnell Thomas, out to Los Angeles, who was on the committee but not on the sub-committee, and he sat out there in the hotel and spouted off things about what was going on. He'd never been in a relocation center of course. He laid the groundwork for their first hearings in Los Angeles. And the only people they paid any attention to out there were people like Townshend and others from Poston, who ran off at the time they had their trouble down there in November. Townshend took a government car and was away for a week because he was scared to death and because the project director wouldn't bring the Army in.

He's the one who, we said, lied or gave misinformation in forty-two different cases, and John Costello came back [Laughter] after lunch and said, "Mr. Myer, we've been over Mr. Townshend's testimony and we only find thirty-nine," and I bowed to him and bowed to the press and said, "We'll settle for thirty-nine."

Fry: And Costello was perfectly serious. [Laughter]

Myer: I don't know. It was Robert Stripling, of course. It was Stripling's idea. It was his way of trying to prove that we were inaccurate, see. That's the only thing I can figure out. It was a dumb thing to do because the press boys sitting up there, about eight or ten of them, just howled.

Fry: I'm sure it cracked them up. [Laughter]



Myer: Right. This is the kind of people they had in those hearings. So we never got a crack at it until July 6, you see. They were holding these hearings in May, June at the centers, and we never got before the press, you see, to an open hearing until July. They had an open hearing in Los Angeles, but we were not there. Some of the Poston boys were there, but they weren't allowed to do much about it. But July 6th and 7th we had our day, and what a day! Two days.

We had stacks of mimeographed material three or four feet high. Because we had decided that the only thing to do, finally, was to document every rumor and every charge that was made and document the testimony of Townshend and others. We went up there loaded for bear, and every time a question would come up that related to any of the allegations we'd begin handing out our mimeographed rebuttal to the press. So we were loaded, we were really loaded. And the nice thing about those hearings was that there were representatives from a lot of goodwill people around the country. It wasn't a big crowd but we had some wonderful people there. And they went back home and told what a bunch of people these were and what a beating we were getting and these, the goodwill people, really began to roll up their sleeves and become active on our side about that time. This was in mid-'43. And it was a good thing. It turned out quite well.

Fry: Did you get fair press coverage on this in California?

Myer: I don't remember. I don't think very much. We got it in the rest of the country pretty well, and it wasn't a big thing as far as the press was concerned.

Fry: I thought it might have been a kind of turning point for you in terms of opinion.

Myer: Well, it was a turning point but mainly because of these goodwill people who attended the hearings and saw what was going on and got mad. And they went back and helped to organize local committees and others and really went to town.

#### Selection of Center Sites

Fry: Did you have anything to do with selecting the camp sites?





- Myer: Just a little. The one in Utah and two in Arkansas were selected after I came on. Most of them had been already established. You see, Manzanar and Poston were used as assembly centers to begin with. They were already on the way. Manzanar was turned over to WRA on June 1. It had been an assembly center. And there are good reasons why we had a problem at Manzanar too. Because all of the tough boys from Terminal Island down on the coast, the fishermen and so on moved in there very early in the game and had taken over. They had a kitchen workers' union. These old boys moved into the kitchens and they really held sway for a while. That led up to part of our problem. We had the disturbance -- then -- in 1942.
- Fry: And these, what you call tough boys, had been put in together --
- Myer: Well, they just moved in. They just moved in. They were evacuated, you see, so they moved up to Manzanar, which was one of the early assembly centers. The first people they evacuated were the people on Terminal Island, in Southern California, off the coast there. There was a jetty or something where a lot of them lived, you see, and they moved that whole group out immediately.
- Fry: Yes, I guess they were scared of what they were going to do -- there were some rumors.
- Myer: Well, you know, these old rumors about people who jumped ship and that sort of thing, who were Japanese spies. Oh, there were all kinds. People get crazy-scared and do a lot of foolish things, and Earl Warren did some of them.
- Fry: Well, I guess Warren was quite critical about choosing California as a site for two of these camps.
- Myer: I don't know. There was a battle about the Manzanar one. You see, this was up in the watershed that provided water for Los Angeles from Owens Lake and Owens Valley. I wasn't available, of course; the Army decided this, you see and the Army was sitting in the saddle in those days. The war was on. So they selected the site, and there was objection to it on the part of people in Los Angeles. There was objection when we had some hogs that we were feeding garbage up there which were supposed to be polluting the water, even after I came on. It wasn't but nevertheless they thought so. And Tule Lake -- I don't know who selected that -- frankly. It was already partially built and had people in it when I visited it in the last of June, '42, within two weeks after I came on the job.



- Fry: At that time Tule Lake contained just more or less a cross-section of the Japanese?
- Myer: Oh, yes, same as any other center. Except that most of them were from California.

#### Public Opinion and the Press

- Fry: Do you remember when Warren complained that the Japanese at Tule Lake were allowed to use long distance telephones? He thought this was a security risk.
- Myer: No, I don't remember that. We didn't hear much from Warren after we got so busy with things, except for his Columbus speech in June, 1943. And this was so mild compared with a lot of things the Legion was talking about that we carried the battle to them, you see, on our relocation program. And the problem of making people believe that we were not feeding the Japanese people better meat than the boys in the Army.
- Fry: Was this a kind of running type of complaint?
- Myer: Oh, it continued over months.
- Fry: That you were giving these people too good treatment, coddling them?
- Myer: Continued over months. Most of it came out, of course, at San Francisco and Los Angeles, and the Hearst papers would begin to put out rumors of this kind. The first one was that we were planning to pay them more for working than we were paying the boys in the Army. This was when Tom Clark was still out there, and the Army was still in charge of Manzanar. Then they began to talk about the meat supply, etc.

And then a little later on, the strongest campaign of that type we had was put on by the Denver Post. And they sent a chap, by the name of Jack Carberry up to Heart Mountain to do some investigating. And he found something that they could really play on because the Army Quartermaster's Corps, who was serving us at that time, didn't have enough warehouses to warehouse everything they wanted reasonably near a source of supply for the west, and we had some extra at Heart Mountain and they had packed a lot of stuff in there that wasn't meant for us at all. And of course,



- Myer: Carberry found it and said we had enough stuff, you see, to feed kids for the next hundred years and all that kind of thing. Oh, they really went all out. They ran banner red headlines on us for weeks. But after all we could meet that kind of thing. There wasn't much they could do about it.
- Fry: You mean you could meet it? Or you could just go ahead and operate and ignore the allegations?
- Myer: We could go ahead and operate and in the meantime if any question came up, we'd tell folks what the facts were and we put out press releases on it, but went right ahead because there wasn't much else we could do about it. And of course the Army was supplying that stuff.
- Fry: Was there any paper in California that did take your press releases and did run them?
- Myer: Up until the time of the Tule Lake incident, the Chronicle was very decent, very decent. They had a little hard time doing it, but they were. Lawrence Davis was the New York Times correspondent from out there, who got to be my great and good friend. They were both all right. I mean, they were fair. Up until Tule Lake, I can't think of the name of the editorial writer that really took our skin off after Tule Lake.
- Fry: From the Chronicle?
- Myer: Yes. Well, if I heard it, I'd know it immediately, but I just can't recall it. It's probably Freudian because we met with him after Tule Lake. We brought up this editorial. He called us stupid -- a bunch of bureaucrats that had been raised up in positions they weren't qualified for. Oh, he just took us for a ride. Well, when we got through talking with him about this problem he said, "O.K., I'll withdraw the 'stupid' but I won't withdraw the rest of it." And I said, "Well, that's up to you." So what we did was to put one of our very experienced men out of the Washington office at Tule Lake, and we took him around and introduced him to all the people from the papers -- the Chronicle and others. We had him go and meet all the local press up in that area and tell them that they were welcome at the center any time they wanted to come in, if there were any rumors to call him up and he would fill them in. It took a month or two to calm them down, but they got everything they wanted. But you see, we were getting this beating because the Army closed the gates when they took over at Tule Lake and wouldn't let any newspaper men in.





Myer: Which of course is stupid. From our standpoint it was very stupid. And that's the thing that put us in a very bad way.

Fry: Just at the time when you needed maximum coverage.

Myer: Oh, we needed reporters in there checking on the stuff that we had to check out ourselves. And, you see, we didn't get out a press release until the 14th of November.

Fry: Two weeks after it happened.

Myer: Yes, two weeks. And the reason we didn't was because the reports officer had resigned and there wasn't anybody whose full time job it was to do that, and too, there were so many crazy rumors that it took two weeks to check it out. And we decided to just sit it out and get all the information together and put out a press release. We held a press conference in Elmer Davis' office, in the Office of War Information, as a matter of fact.



## II THE RELOCATION CENTERS

### The Job Corps and Agricultural Work

- Fry: Well, the first week that you were on the job, you said that Tom Holland gave a report. He had come out and looked at California and came back and said that it was necessary to relocate these people out in communities as soon as possible.
- Myer: Right. Tom had been on a field trip. I had never met him before, and I moved in to the WRA office on the 17th of June. We had a staff conference every Wednesday night after dinner; we all stayed on and had dinner down town, and Tom got back from his field trip in time for that first staff conference that I held. He had gone to some of the assembly centers, including the one up in Oregon because at that time, the regional office out there was starting to promote the Job Corps, which fizzled. And there were people that they were trying to recruit in the Job Corps to go out to work in sugar beets. This was in June of '42. The leave for agricultural work was provided for by Eisenhower and Bendetsen in May of 1942 before WRA had taken over any centers. They, the evacuees, were still in the War Department assembly centers. \* The plan for student relocation was in the making at about the same time. It was handled by a committee recommended by Clarence Pickett, of the American Friends Service Committee, at about the same time. \*\* It was under very limited conditions, you know.
- Fry: Could you put in right here why the Job Corps fizzled?
- Myer: Well, people didn't want it. Somebody's bright idea, and it went into the Executive Order that a Job Corps would be formed. Well,

---

\* Myer, Dillon S. Uprooted Americans: The Japanese-Americans and The War Relocation Authority During World War II (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971). See Chapter 10.

\*\* See Interview with Harry and Ruth Kingman (in progress, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library) for a description of the West Coast student relocation program.



- Myer: they tried to sign up a group in Oregon in the assembly center up there, and out of 150 people who were available, only ten or fifteen were willing to sign up for the Job Corps.
- Fry: The Japanese themselves didn't want it?
- Myer: The Japanese themselves didn't want it. And when I came on, of course, we already knew this because Tom had been out there at this time. And they tried at Poston to sign up a group and register them.
- Fry: I see, I had heard that this was due to the traditional opposition to Japanese farm labor by labor groups.
- Myer: No, no, I don't think it had a thing to do with it. It was simply the opposition on the part of the Japanese-Americans to sign up in something like a Job Corps. The idea, you see, was to be that they would sign up to do the kind of thing that would help the war without being in the military. And this didn't appeal to them and didn't appeal to the Issei particularly, or anybody else, and I don't blame them. And frankly, I thought it was pretty questionable myself and we just let it ride along for a little while and in December [1942] we put it to sleep.
- Fry: After Tom Holland came back East and talked to you, he had this new idea. Is that true? It was a new idea?
- Myer: It wasn't a new idea. I'm sure it had been discussed. But Milton Eisenhower had had the idea that they would relocate these people all over the country in small camps and have workers available. After the meeting of the Governors in Salt Lake on April 7, 1942, he just threw up his hands and said, there isn't going to be a chance for relocation -- generally -- and he pretty well convinced his staff of that. Morrill Tozier, who was at that time assistant information head and later was my information head after John Baker went to the Marines, told me that he was a bit shocked when I very strongly leaned toward Holland's thesis. Holland came back and made one of the most beautiful and most articulate statements I've ever heard in a staff meeting about his feelings about this. Really, it was a touching thing.

Almost immediately after that staff meeting, I went on a field trip and I visited Tule Lake and Poston in addition to visiting the regional office in San Francisco. And I came back and said I agreed with Tom Holland and gave orders for them to draw up plans for gradual relocation outside the camps. And the first one was very limited. There were no Kibei involved, only Nisei who had not been educated in Japan.





Myer: After all, these people had been evacuated, they'd been put in assembly centers and relocation centers and they had been tarred with a very bad stick. In order to get acceptance throughout the country, we felt we had to go very cautiously and begin to place some very bright young people, which we did. The college relocation program was good, for example, and was already underway when I came in. The idea had been started but there wasn't much done about it until I got in. Even Tom thought we ought to go very cautiously. He used some individuals about whom there could be no question whatsoever. We were very cautious about our July 20th plan, you see. This was just a month after I came on the job. Then we issued our final one in September to be effective 1st of October, 1942. But when I came back from that June trip and took this position on relocation, Tozier told me a little later that he was a bit jolted because he said he had assumed that it was going to be impossible. He'd been convinced of that by Milton's position, but he said, "The thing that sold me on why you felt it ought to be done -- was my statement that I wasn't going to contribute to the idea of having further reservations like the Bureau of Indian Affairs had had throughout the years -- and I was sure that if we didn't do something about it, that's what we would come to." And he said, "I didn't want that either. I hadn't thought of it in that way."

Fry: I hadn't thought of that either, that these camps might eventually become permanent.

Myer: Well, you see, Poston was then on an Indian reservation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs was running the center; I found out a little later that John Collier had been down there and made a speech and said they'd probably be there for forty years and would develop the land. So, some people were willing, you see.

Fry: And it would have been put under the Indian Services?

Myer: Well, I presume so, but I wouldn't know.

Fry: Indian and Oriental reservations.

Myer: Well, some people wanted it that way. I, of course, had no way to prove that this would happen. I just didn't want to take any chances that it might happen.

Fry: Sometimes it's as interesting to see what doesn't happen in history as it is to see what does!



### Troubles in the Centers

Fry: Well, I guess, your very first problem was at Manzanar in December after you came in?

Myer: No, at Poston. Poston was the first one. We had a strike at Poston Camp I. The FBI came in and arrested a couple of boys, put them in jail, and the people in Poston Camp I struck and didn't do anything except to help feed people, which was very necessary, of course, for everyday living. And it happened that Wade Head, who was the center director, and Ralph Gelvin, his associate, were with me up at Salt Lake where we had a conference of some of the western directors following my visit to Poston. It happened right after my visit to Poston where I had made a speech. I may have been partly responsible for that blow-up because I followed John Collier, and nobody had ever told me John Collier had made this speech about their probably being there for forty years and developing the lands. And my main speech at that time was that we were starting an all-out relocation program and we hoped that people could move out, you see, from the centers into the rest of the country, and we were going to do every thing we could do to encourage it. We were going to stop anything in the way of industry at the center except what had to do with center life. And it was just completely opposite of what Collier had said.

Well, they didn't tell me until after I'd made the speech, you see, and this, I'm sure, disturbed a lot of people because after all, they were just getting settled. And John and some of the men that he had brought in down there were figuring on making an ideal city as far as that was possible under these conditions. And this was a factor in this situation. But the main factor in the strike was that they picked up some evacuees who were popular among certain leading people in the community, you see, and they put the pressure on the community and called a strike. That happened in November. And within a week or two after that, Manzanar blew up, on December 3rd.

Fry: And this was in 1942. According to my notes, it was almost an identical situation at Manzanar. Somebody was arrested -- is that right?

Myer: That started in the same way. But we'd had it at Poston before Manzanar. And we had a reports officer at Poston by the name of James, who considered himself quite a sleuth. And he predicted that this sort of thing was going to happen at all the ten centers.



Myer: That was my bad month, the month of December of 1942 was the worst month that I probably ever spent on any job because I didn't know what to do, I didn't know whether everything was going to blowup. You see, we'd already had two blowups. A boy was killed, and a couple more died later of some wounds at the Manzanar incident. The Army had earlier pressured us to hire forty or fifty internal security people that they had in each of the assembly centers. And we said, no. We hired one officer at each center and then used evacuees. And of course, when anything happened, the evacuees disappeared fast. And we didn't know whether we could get along without more officers or not. I mean, I didn't know at that stage.

#### Security and Law Enforcement

Fry: Well, this brings up a question that I'm interested in because Earl Warren was the head of the law enforcement agencies right at this particular period in California. When Manzanar blew, when these people were arrested, was this all federal action, FBI action?

Myer: Yes.

Fry: Where were they imprisoned?

Myer: At Independence, I think, to begin with, but they brought them back to the center rather quickly before the final blow came, and kept them incarcerated there.

Fry: So local law enforcement was not involved.

Myer: They had nothing to do with it. The only time we ever had local enforcement help was when a crime was committed inside the center, like the murder at Tule Lake, for example, which was never solved. We invited in the district attorney and the local authorities to try to solve that one. That type of thing, which was beyond our power to handle and would have been a court case if they had developed it, but otherwise the internal security was all ours and the FBI was used on any investigations. As I look back, it was probably a mistake because they -- they flubbed it. You see, in the early stages, and this was one of the early stages, if they got reports on somebody they thought they ought to pick up, they'd come right in and pick them up without even reporting to the project director. We stopped that finally but we had to battle to get it stopped.





Fry: Is that the way they worked at Poston?

Myer: I don't believe it was. Frankly, I don't know. I think somebody at Poston reported the incident.

Fry: Well, at that time, if I remember correctly, when the FBI moved into the action, it was more difficult to be sure that a person's civil rights were adhered to. Such things as allowing them legal counsel and things like that. Was this your experience?

Myer: Well, I hadn't thought so much about that. The way they ignored us, though, was the thing that bothered us more than anything else. Our policy was that we didn't do any of our own investigating on traitorous acts and that sort of thing. So they were invited in, I'm sure, a few times by the project directors to check and I suppose that they were at Poston. I don't know. I frankly don't know, I am not sure about Manzanar. In any case, I think the people at Manzanar were probably arrested by our own internal security officer because they had had an agreement with the leaders and they broke it, you see. They picked up a couple of the ringleaders and took them down to Independence and put them in jail. They had the cooperation of the jailers down there. They hired some space, you see. So I feel sure that's what happened there, but I don't know about Poston. However, there was very great antipathy on the part of the evacuees against the FBI because, you see, the FBI did a great deal of the searching of homes. They helped pick up the Issei that went into Justice Camps, and the searching of the parents and other Issei in their household and were rather rugged about it, I 'm afraid. So anybody that reported to the FBI was a dog in these camps.

Fry: And that was you, was it?

Myer: No, no, any Nisei or Issei that cooperated. A fellow internee was a dog if he was cooperating with them at all. For example, "Tokie" Slocum who was a veteran of World War I, Tokie was a great braggart and he had a long list of VIP's that he had known, and at the time of the Manzanar incident, he bragged about the fact that he was working with the FBI. They had to get him out of that center fast or they'd have killed him. He got out and stayed out. Tokie was a drinker and a braggart and a crazy guy. I mean, the kind of fellow who'd come in and throw his arms around you and tell you what a patriot he was. [Laughter]



Legal Questions

Fry: What were the key test cases that concerned you?

Myer: The Korematsu case was the one they were hoping to get a ruling that the evacuation was unconstitutional. They decided that it was constitutional. They had three or four dissenters, however, on that decision, and Justice Jackson was one of them. He was the one that made the famous loaded weapon statement. In which he said, in essence, that it was one thing to have a military situation and to make this kind of a ruling. It was another thing to establish this, as a precedent in law for future years and that this stood as a loaded weapon for the future to be used willy nilly. I use that in the preface to my book. And I'm going to use it at the tailend if my editor agrees to re-iterate it in view of the fact that the 1950 Internal Security Act has a section that would allow the setting up of concentration camps. If the President finds people who are on the wrong side of the war effort they can be put into them without trial. And this is what Justice Jackson talked about. Senator Inouye from Hawaii and twenty-six other Senators have a bill in to repeal that proviso in the 1950 act, and I hope they are successful.

Fry: In the Endo case, was the ruling just that no loyal American citizen can be held under any circumstances?

Myer: That's right. There wasn't any question about this girl being loyal. The only thing is that we were wanting this case heard much earlier because we were insisting, you see, that she follow the same procedure of making a request to relocate and follow up the agreements that we had with the relocatees to report where she'd gone and keep in touch. And we wanted the Supreme Court to handle this much earlier, and we battled and battled and battled on four or five different occasions for an hour or two at a time with Charles Fahey who was the Solicitor General, and he wanted us to moot the case by letting her go. We said, "No." This is the one that we want support from the Supreme Court on. Then we can lift all of our regulations, you see, in regard to anybody that's been cleared and we won't have to go through the process, but until we do that, then we would be vulnerable unless we had court backing. Well, we finally got him to bring it to the court but it came too late. He lost the case by the way. That was his first case to be lost before the court.

Fry: And he didn't like that.



Myer: He wanted a record where he hadn't lost a case before the Supreme Court, and he knew he was going to lose this one. And we knew he was going to lose it. I saw Charles Fahey about a year or two ago. I was down to attend a retirement ceremony, and he was there. And I shook hands with him and Mrs. Fahey was with him, and he explained to her who I was, she said, "The one who urged that you bring a case before the Supreme Court," and he laughed and he said, "That's right, this is the man that pressed me to bring the case."

### Segregation of "Subversives" and Renunciants

Myer: The Army's thesis was that lifting of the evacuation order couldn't be considered until we'd carried out a segregation program which they insisted for months that we do, you see.

Fry: Oh, yes, they wanted you to determine the dangerous ones and put them all together, is that right?

Myer: That's right. And, of course, the irony of that whole business was that General DeWitt and Bendetsen were telling us just how we could do it. On their thesis of separating the Kibei and so on, they could have done the whole damn business in assembly centers before they ever moved a one to relocation center. But the minute they got rid of the responsibility they began to hammer on us, you see. So, we finally succumbed and in early June of '43, we announced a segregation program, and this is what led to our Tule Lake fiasco.

Fry: Those were sent to Tule.

Myer: That's right. This is something that I opposed very, very strongly until we finally had a center directors' meeting in Washington on the 31st of May, 1943. We talked about it at length and I finally said, "What do you think? Let's see hands." And every one of them said there should be a segregation program. So I couldn't buck that. After all, I wasn't living with it every day in the centers you know, as they were. Our staff were divided here in Washington; some of them were very strong for it and some of them weren't.

Fry: And the internees, I guess, weren't in on a decision like that.

Myer: No. Well, excepting that the Japanese American Citizens League favored it very strongly, yes. I kid Mike Masaoka yet and tell him he helped cause our Tule Lake problem!





Fry: Why?

Myer: Well, they thought it would help the rest of them, you see. If all those people who wanted to go to Japan were sorted out and allowed to go back, that would make things much better for the rest of the Nisei who wanted to stay here. Of course, he and a lot of other people didn't anticipate the kind of problems that resulted. We'd been in on all these many moves -- and knew what emotional upsets there were going to be. But they didn't anticipate what would happen when a lot of old people who had been in the Imperial Valley and other rural areas decided to go back to Japan and then would put pressure on their kids to do away with their citizenship and go back with them. And this was a mess, an awful mess, a terrible thing. Well, anyhow, it's over. Thank God. We came through it, and most of the kids who lost their citizenship through renunciation got it back finally, if they wanted it back. There were only about four to five hundred unfortunate renunciants that did go back to Japan and had terrible lives there. They got along all right for a while because the Army used them as employees, you see, to help serve as interpreters. But when that was over, they weren't very popular over there.

Fry: No, I guess they weren't.

Myer: We didn't really run into much trouble with Tule Lake until we began to have the registration of '43. That was when about three thousand of them refused to register. This was the registration that preceded the volunteering of the 442nd. The Army decided to have a registration of the Nisei who were eligible, and we urged them to have a registration for the whole group because we wanted to use that in part as a basis for cleaning up any leave clearance in our relocation program. It didn't pan out to be too good a thing because some of them didn't want to leave anyhow, and they weren't going to admit that they ever were going to relocate. That was particularly true at Tule Lake. They weren't going to leave California because they feared they could not get back there.

So we had rebellion there, and then, of course, they had help at Tule Lake when the "segregates" began to move in because these tough boys I told you about from Sand Island in Hawaii all went to Tule Lake, and they became the strong arm boys for the evacuee politicians who were trying to move into power at Tule Lake. There's always somebody trying to move into power you know.

It started with the farm workers. A truck upset and a man was killed. This started the ruckus, and the first group got



Myer: organized and they began to put pressure on Ray Best, the Director at Tule Lake. Then I made my visit and left on November 2nd, in the evening, and went to Portland and on up to Seattle and was out of contact for a bit. And on November 4th, I was on the train headed back to Washington when I got word by wire at one of the stations from Ray Best about the trouble that had broken out after I left.

What happened was that we were using trucks to take food out to the evacuees that we'd brought in from other centers to help harvest the crops, because the Tule Lake people refused to harvest them because of the farm strike. So we put up tents and we moved in some loyal evacuees from other centers, but the tough gang from Tule Lake wasn't going to have that. So, about a hundred or two hundred of them moved in with clubs and had a fight with the internal security officers and they started to move in on Ray Best's house and were after him. So the Army was called in and they took over. The fight was over moving food out to these outlanders, you see, who were brought in to harvest the crops which they wouldn't harvest. But there was a bunch of toughs at that time, and as I say, these Hawaiian boys were right in the middle of it, it was just their meat, you see.

#### The 442nd.

Fry: Did you have to battle a long time to get the Nisei into the armed services?

Myer: Not too long, because I came in in June [1942], you see, and I started working on it almost immediately. It was absolutely essential. It had to be. Thank God, the folks in Hawaii really came through. The head army intelligence officer out there came to Washington and spent two or three months working with us to get the Nisei into the armed services. Because they had the 100th Battalion which came from Hawaii, you know, and they moved them over to the mainland, and there were a lot of other Nisei boys that wanted in the army too. We pushed it through with their support and the support of the Japanese American Citizens League's Mike Masaoka, Saburo Kido -- all the group who were heading it up at that time -- they really stuck their necks out.

It was announced in January of '43, so it was only about seven or eight months after I came in, but of course it took another year before they were active in the battle lines. Sure,



Myer: we had the registration and the volunteers along in February and March of '43 and then of course they went into training. They were in training for months. And they didn't begin to get into active service until around the turn of the year in '44. And then of course is when we needed them very badly for public relations. The Tule Lake thing had broken, you see.





### III RESETTLEMENT

#### Relocation out of the Centers

Fry: Well, let me get some dates established here. Your actual relocation activities began about January 4, 1943, when you began to establish the area field offices, is that right?

Myer: We established our relocation, our all-out relocation policy program as of October 1, 1942, but we didn't get our offices set up until January. In November, we announced that we were closing the San Francisco Regional Office and moving any of the work that was going on there except property and a few other things into Washington. And it was at this time that I began to formulate plans, for area offices. And Tom Holland, who was head of our labor division, who'd been handling relocation up until this time, was up at Heart Mountain and I called on the telephone and told him to come down to San Francisco.

Tom always said that he was ahead of Dillon Myer on relocation up until November, 1942, but he said, "Dillon went past me so fast that I hardly saw him go."

I asked Tom, "How many people can you think of that you can find to establish in area offices over the next thirty days." I said, "I want one at Salt Lake," and I began to tell him where they were to go. Tom wasn't a guy that liked to hire anybody that he didn't know. He picked his first, Chicago one, Constance Ross, a lovely lady he'd known many years ago; she was excellent for Chicago. He picked Harold Fistere for New York and those were the only two people that Tom suggested except Rex Lee whom he'd met on the West Coast. So we moved Rex to Salt Lake City. And it wasn't too long after this that Tom resigned because he felt he wasn't keeping up and he didn't like administration. And this began to be a real administrative job. He considered himself to be a consultant.



Myer: So we established offices beginning in January. Rex was already handling the WRA part of the agricultural leave. The temporary leave for agricultural work. And we established some district offices up in the area where there was going to be temporary work. So we had a semblance of an organization in that area. We moved Rex to Salt Lake City to set up the area office and he established these district offices for an all-out program. And then we began to establish offices in Chicago, Cleveland, and New York. Key offices, and then we set up, forty-some district offices that were under the supervision of these area offices finally.

This was essential, for several reasons, not only to be helpful to the evacuees, which is important because we had to help guide them and carry the battle in new communities, and be sure that they understood the necessity for working with personnel officers of industry and local agencies where they went. This side of it was essential but the public relations side was just as essential -- working with local communities which we established all over the country. We helped to pick the kind of people who had some know-how and were willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work and to meet the local press and prepare the way generally. And this was a highly essential thing that we did, and this was one of the major things that helped us get the job done. We couldn't have done it otherwise.

Fry: So you really did have some community organization to do then?

Myer: Oh yes. Tom started out thinking we could do it with volunteer help alone you see, and he got two or three local committees appointed. That's how he got Constance Ross in Chicago. She was asked to help select a local committee. This was his idea of how to get it done, to begin with. In early July, this was all right. But six months later, it wasn't enough. We were going all-out. We had to have organized offices, and we had to have organized committees all over the country. We found it highly essential.

Fry: Now, along about this time you were trying to get the Army to allow families of veterans, or families of Nisei in the armed forces to return to the West Coast?

Myer: On March 11, 1943, we sent a very long and articulate letter to Secretary of War Stimson urging that the evacuation order be lifted. In it we presented three or four alternatives in case they didn't want to go the whole way. But our thesis was that the war was no longer a danger to the United States mainland.



Myer: And consequently it was time to begin to let these people return home to take care of their business. We didn't get a reply until May because Assistant Secretary John McCloy was in Africa, and the people who prepared most of the reply for the Secretary were the Western Defense Command Staff. So we were turned down. After our 1943 letter we kept pressing and in spring of '44 we began to get support for a change. And, as a matter of fact, we got it through Secretary Stimson and [Edward R.] Stettinius, Secretary of State at that time -- the Virginian.

They had a meeting and agreed that we ought to go ahead and lift the evacuation order. This was as far back as May or June of '44. The recommendation was sent to the White House, but one of the Presidential assistants decided that it wasn't quite the politic thing to do in an election year, so it was held off until December. After election. So we didn't get it done even though we got agreement on the part of the Secretary of War. So it was at least six - seven months later. But during that period they did begin to do what we had suggested as one of the alternatives in the letter of March 11, 1943. They did begin to let family members of veterans and others move back step-by-step without announcing it. They wouldn't allow us to announce it. They wouldn't allow anybody to talk about it, you see. But there was infiltration that went on during that period of six or seven months before the order was finally lifted in December. The order was effective the 2nd of January 1945.

Fry: In 1944, the Republican party was beginning to think of Earl Warren as a favorite son to the Republican Convention, the year that he was actually offered the possibility of running as Vice-President and he turned it down. All through that spring, his political support gathered, and it's Leo Katcher's\* feeling that it was this stand, against the Japanese being returned, as much as any other reason, "that brought him the early editorial support of William Randolph Hearst for the 1944 nomination. In an editorial that took up most of the front page of Hearst newspapers throughout the country, Hearst hailed in inch-high letters, 'CALIFORNIA'S GOVERNOR EARL WARREN SINCERE, COURAGEOUS LEADER,'" and he goes on and talks about his being "a GREAT AMERICAN...All the American people will profit from his sincere AMERICANISM." So I thought that maybe this pressure was also being felt a good deal by Earl Warren at the time.

---

\* Op. cit. p. 173





Myer: I'd forgotten about the Hearst editorial. We weren't paying much attention to it at that time, as long as Warren wouldn't hit us directly. But of course John Bricker from my own state became the Vice-Presidential candidate. And he did a crazy bit when he visited California. I've forgotten exactly what he said, but it was one of the most stupid statements that anybody could have made.

Fry: So that was an issue then in California?

Myer: Oh, it was still an issue because they were running in '44, you see. I mean, we were still in business and he'd been advised by somebody out there as to what he should say. And he said it, and as usual, it was kind of stupid.

But the turn of events was on its way; there wasn't any question about it throughout the country as a whole. And I think this was probably sensed by Earl Warren.

By '44, there were a lot of people like the Legionnaires that I met with around the country who were accepting the evacuees as patriotic, efficient workers. We had the local committees across the country working on relocation and had been for a year, and they had been working with industry and a lot of other employers. The number of evacuees that had been relocated was what we called our Exhibit A's -- they were doing a wonderful job as badly needed workers. And, of course, they are the most acceptable people in the world, I mean this kind of group, because we got the bright people out first. They didn't want their families to live in relocation centers and this made a lot of difference.

Fry: Well, it was right at that same time, probably just as you were talking to Earl Warren, that the Supreme Court finally came through with their ruling.

Myer: The very day the Supreme Court ruling came out we got the ruling from the Army. It was right at that time. And, of course, one of the reasons we got the ruling then is because somebody knew that the Supreme Court was likely to make a ruling that the Army folks weren't going to be happy with. I think this put pressure on the Army to go ahead and get the job done. As I say, we'd had Stimson's support earlier to help move the people back, but nevertheless some of the generals were still fighting it.

Our two worst were [Hugh Aloysius] Drum of the Eastern Defense Command and DeWitt of the Western Defense Command. By that time, DeWitt had been moved out and General [Delos Carleton]



Myer: Emmons came in after DeWitt for a while, and then there were two more replacements. After DeWitt and Bendetsen left, General [William] Wilbur became the deputy who took over Bendetsen's job. He was a real headache for us.

Fry: I was talking to Bob Powers,\* who was coordinator of law enforcement under the Attorney General at that time, and he said that they made rather elaborate plans to contact all the local law enforcement officials and get their complete cooperation in protecting the rights of the returning internees.

Myer: I think that this did happen. Of course we had some people who turned their backs on young lads who were shooting in the houses and doing other dastardly things during the stage between about March and June of 1945, but after [Harold L.] Ickes [Secretary of the Interior] blew the old Justice of the Peace out of the water out there who had let the kids off who had been caught shooting into evacuee houses, we didn't have any more trouble. I think the law enforcement officers began to look around and see who they were that were causing the trouble and told them they'd better stop. This would be my guess.

Fry: About how many incidents were there?

Myer: Thirty -- I think I have listed in my book. I didn't list them all, but about thirty. And they weren't all shootings. Some, like the Placer County incident, were incendiary attempts -- trying to burn a packing house, and so on.

Fry: You must have had visions of worse things to come at that time.

Myer: Well, yes, I wasn't too sure. We were worried about it of course. One of the reasons we were worried about it was because some of the goodwill people said, see, these people shouldn't go back. And they were actually advising people to stay in the centers, when we had our schedules set up to finish the job. And you'll find in my book a comment about our great and good friend, an editorial writer here on the Post, Alan Barth, who had been with the angels all the way through. He wrote about fourteen editorials, and he kept in touch with the legal side of it. But I held him off for weeks from writing one on the other side. You see, some of these goodwill people were pressuring them to go on the side of keeping centers open. And I remember I was invited out to the Eugene Meyers' residence, his boss's residence, and he introduced me to Mrs. Meyer during this time. And he told her about the arguments we were having.

---

\* Robert B. Powers, "Law Enforcement, Race Relations: 1930-1960 " Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1971.



Myer: And she said. "Well, the poor dears, what are they going to do about it; they're going to get shot." And I said, "No, they're not going to get shot." So I tried to convince her, and I did convince him enough to hold him off.

But we had to have the Japanese stay put in California because the opposition was trying to scare them out, and we knew what it was trying to do. They weren't trying to shoot people; they were trying to scare them away. So I spent a lot of time urging people to stay put. I drove all the way from Los Angeles clear out through the Valley and clear up to Sacramento to visit people who'd been shot at, in order to assure them that they weren't in any great danger and we hoped that they'd stay. And only had one family that said they weren't going to stay, and that was one down near Lancaster outside Los Angeles. They'd gotten fed up, just he and his wife, I think, but the rest all stuck. The returnees had sense enough to know what was going on and they weren't going to be bluffed out.

Fry: Did you set up a welfare system for those who couldn't support themselves right away?

Myer: We did that through the regular channels. We turned money over to the Social Security Board and they arranged with the state people to handle the funds and to see to it that it was handled through normal welfare channels, and if we ran into any trouble out there with the local counties who weren't doing their job, we reported to them and they did something about it.

Fry: Did you have any resistance on the dissemination of funds to the right people?

Myer: We had no problem at all. It was handled in normal channels. The only problem we had, some reporter from the Times dug up a family of ten or twelve members, I guess, and according to the normal rules in California, they got six thousand dollars a year income.

Fry: Which sounded like a fortune at that time.

Myer: It sounded like a lot of money. Well, of course, they had to feed a lot of mouths. I talked to the social worker about that, and I said, "I think maybe you ought to squeeze the rules a little bit and give them basic subsistence but be sure they don't get any more than that." I just said be sure that they don't get more money than they need.





Fry: Did you feel that problems as far as acceptance of the Japanese on the West Coast were over by the time you closed up your office on June 30, 1946?

Myer: No question about it. Sure, all the problems weren't over, but I'm talking about the acceptance of those who had gone back. A lot of people wanted labor; they had labor before, and these people were getting settled in. Most of those who could work had jobs even if they didn't work at their old-time jobs, and there wasn't any problem of that type.

The major problem that we still faced was to get the discriminatory legislation killed off so that they could own land and do the things that they ought to have been able to do throughout the years. And that happened. And the Supreme Court decision, of course, on the alien land laws out there knocked out the land laws, and then we finally got the Immigration and Nationality Act passed, you see, allowing them to apply for citizenship, and that finished almost everything off.

Fry: I thought that was later, in the 50's.

Myer: Well it was, in '52, but that ended up the whole campaign.

Fry: Did you continue to work on this after WRA was closed down?

Myer: Oh, sure, everytime we got an opportunity to testify on anything that had to do with laws, we were available, and the ACLU knew of course we were. Property claims for example, we testified on the property claims bill. We recommended it in our final report. But even during the time that Bob Kenny, who was supposed to be a great liberal, was Attorney General of California they went right ahead with the escheat business.

Fry: With what?

Myer: Escheat. Taking over those lands from the people that they claimed were bought in their Nisei son's name, you see. Fortunately, the legislature finally turned around and reimbursed some of these people for their lands, but it took quite a long time.

Fry: There were also quite a few court cases, right at that time I think to try to get the lands back. I mean the lands which were taken from them when they had to go into the camps.



- Myer: Most of the lands were not taken from them when they went into the camps. They lost their leases, yes. But their own lands were still intact. But the escheat operation on the part of the California Attorney General didn't get under way for some months after the evacuation. And they were still at it in 1945 and '46, which was amazing.
- Fry: Did you do a lot of talking to the evacuees?
- Myer: Oh, yes. I visited the centers as often as I could find the opportunity to do it. And I never went to the centers but what we had was a mass meeting for anybody that wanted to attend, in the auditorium. I also met with the council generally. In the early stages it was mainly meeting with the councils rather than the masses because they always wanted to meet with me. But, in the final operation, I visited every center during the early part of 1945 to tell them what our plans were, the schedule for closing the centers, plans for relocation, the welfare phase of the program, for those that needed it, etc. And of course, we always had a question and answer period, during that time. And it was essential that I go out and meet with them at that stage of the game because they had to have it from the horse's mouth.

#### Public Relations and the Press

- Fry: The other thing that I wanted you to tell us about is Captain [George H.] Grandstaff and his speeches. And did this occur before the lifting of the exclusion order?
- Myer: No. It came sometime in 1945. You see, it took us a little over a year after the order was lifted to complete the job. We worked through the whole of '45 to finish up. It was shortly after the first of the year, 1945, that these depredations began to happen. And Grandstaff was a lieutenant with the 442nd, who was home on leave in California. He heard about the Placer County incident in which they tried to burn a Nisei or Issei packing house up there. And so he wrote the Army headquarters here in Washington, and asked to be allowed additional furlough time to go out and meet the people in areas of this type, and of course, Bob Cozzens got hold of him and helped to schedule him. They visited sheriffs and other leaders in the community and made speeches at luncheon clubs. And as a result of Grandstaff's idea, he cleared up Placer County and a lot of other places. But we also got four other people, who had been with the 442nd, who went to help out. Bob Cozzens hot the idea,



Myer: so we asked the Army to send them out. McCloy agreed with us, and they covered the state.

Finally, we got a colonel, Lieutenant Colonel Wallace Moore, who was with the boys out in the Pacific doing intelligence work. And he came in and really mopped up. Because the people didn't know, you see, that these boys were in the army in the Pacific. We were under wraps on that for months because it was intelligence work. They didn't want the Japanese to know that we had Japanese-Americans in there. So we were under wraps and didn't dare talk about it. It began to slip out, fortunately, but by the time the colonel came on, of course, he could talk about it, because the war was over. He told the people what wonderful lads these were and how they were out in front gathering information and directing fire and interpreting for our troops. So this was a very helpful thing during the last months of our relocation in California.

Fry: Who did they talk to?

Myer: They talked to Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, luncheon clubs, and they went to visit the sheriff and the law enforcement officers, anybody else that were in key spots and the people that'd been causing the trouble.

Fry: This was primarily in California?

Myer: All in California. We didn't have that problem in Washington and Oregon. We had the problem at Hood River but we pretty well licked that early in the game. And we had the problem with Dave Beck and his boys trying to keep people out of the business that his people had gotten into in the Seattle area. You see, Dave Beck had a very close relationship with the men who had originally been truckers who had gone into business, and they had taken over the cleaning and pressing business, and they'd also taken over the vegetable markets.

Fry: In California?

Myer: No, in Washington. And we had a battle to lick Dave Beck up there, but we finally licked him.

There was a group in California -- in the Los Angeles area. There was a crazy minister, who had gone on a campaign against the Nisei. Bob Cozzens and I went out to see him, and the first thing he did was to say, "Let's have prayer," so we had a prayer before we started to talk, and then he had prayer at the end. He was that kind of a pious two-faced person that believed that anything he did was the will of God.





Myer: I was scheduled to speak to a luncheon club and he brought a half a dozen people and sat right down to my left while I was making my speech. This was soon after the Tule Lake blowup. And I was delighted to see them there, of course. They began to ask questions and about that time though a man got up, in the middle toward the back, and he said, "Mr. Myer, what do you think would have happened to the people of the type that caused your trouble at Tule Lake if this had happened in Japan during wartime?" I said, "They'd have shot them, but we don't shoot people in the United States for what we think they're thinking." Well, he just sank back in his chair, and when I got through, I got a hand. But, you know, it's this kind of thing, the same kind as the Legion. You have to meet this kind of heckling head-on. And a lot of people hadn't thought about this, you see, from the standpoint of right and wrong. The tendency was to do everything that the enemy was doing that we were criticizing them for, and this was one of them. And it hadn't occurred to them that we don't act like that. That's about the only one I remember where I met with a luncheon club that was tough. I had a wonderful meeting with your San Francisco Commonwealth Club.

Fry: Oh, you did? When was that?

Myer: I don't remember the date. But they gave me a very good reception and an opportunity to tell our story. I flubbed one that day because Ruth Kingman arranged for me to go to the University to meet the student body. [President Robert Gordon] Sproul introduced me to the student body, and I made a speech off the cuff, and I wasn't prepared for it. I did very poorly because I was tired and I wasn't keyed and Ruth Kingman was disappointed and she said to me afterwards, "You don't have a bit of drama in your system." I said, "Well, I certainly didn't in that speech, and I'm sorry I flubbed it and I'm sorry I let you down."

But sometime, not too long after that, we had a meeting down in Pasadena. We had a wonderful lady down there that was with the YWCA. She was a great backer and I saw her every time I went to that area, and she arranged quite a meeting. The room was a fairly sizable room with a lot of people in it. And there was one of those nutty chaps there that had been on the wrong side and been spouting off to the newspapers. And in the midst of the question and answer session, he got up at the back of the room and started to walk forward and he said, "Mr. Myer, I have been talking about this thing and," he said, "nobody has been willing to shake my hand." And I stepped to the front of the platform, and I said, "Step on up, I'll shake your hand." So I shook hands with him. And the crowd clapped, and we had a wonderful time at that



Myer: meeting, and we convinced him, temporarily at least, to change his tune. I got a letter from this lady the next day or two, and she said, "You convinced Mr. So-and so, and he's on the other side of the fence now." So Ruth Kingman came to me after that meeting, she said, "I'll take it all back, you do have some drama in your system."

Fry: Who was Ruth Kingman?

Myer: Ruth Kingman is Harry Kingman's wife, and Harry for years was executive officer of the YMCA at Berkeley.\* During the war, Ruth was the executive secretary of the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play that Galen Fisher and others headed up, and they helped to provide support on the side of the angels. She was wonderful. She worked all during the war.

Fry: I did want to ask you about any change in newspaper support when you began really relocating and returning the Japanese-Americans.

Myer: Well, there wasn't any change in the attitude as far as I remember it, on the part of the Hearst Press and the Los Angeles Times or the McClatchy papers. We didn't see as much of it in the news, but if they found anything that they could blow up a bit, they would blow it up. Generally, I think we had a pretty good press at that time.

### The American Legion

Fry: Was it in November, 1943, when you spoke to the American Legion?

Myer: The American Legion, that's right. I think it was the 16th of November that I met them.

Fry: And you feel that in that speech you were able to change their minds?

Myer: It was a national meeting of State Commanders and State Adjutants. I don't think I did much with the California contingent excepting this, that I convinced the representatives of the other states

---

\* See interview with Ruth Kingman, this volume.

Also, interview in progress with Harry and Ruth Kingman.



Myer: there that something screwy was going on and that this business wasn't what it had been cracked up to be. We stopped Homer Chaillaux cold after that meeting. I mean, he quit. He knew he'd been licked. You know how that meeting came about, don't you?

Fry: No, who set it up?

Myer: Frank Cross, one of our information staff members who years before, had been the executive officer of the Americanism Committee, the same job that Chaillaux had. And I didn't know this until after we got into this battle. So when I found this out, I said to Tozier, his chief, "Bring Frank in, I want to talk to him." So I talked to him about the background. I said, "Do you know anybody on this committee now?" He said, "Yes, I know Jimmy O'Neal quite well." Jimmy lived up in New Hampshire. I said, "You know, you've just bought yourself a trip to New Hampshire." So we financed a trip to New Hampshire to tell Jimmy O'Neal that we wanted to go to that meeting and I wanted to meet with the State Commander and the State Adjutants, and Jimmy O'Neal carried the battle and got me on the program. That's why we got in on it. Jimmy was a good guy.

Well, I don't think I've ever had quite such a turn-around as happened at that time. I'd been on that platform of course literally for hours because I had made my speech, they'd had some preliminaries, and then we had a long question and answer period, most of which was with your California State Commander and Adjutant, who were nettling me. Which was good. I mean, I was delighted. This was my day in court, and I was having the time of my life. Well, this meeting was in a hall with a hallway running alongside. There were two or three doors that came out into the hallway. Well, frankly I was so pressured to get to the men's room that I rushed out of the first doorway I could get to as soon as they broke up, and it took me twenty minutes to get to that room because they kept coming out of these other doors and taking hold of my arm and saying, "My God, you were wonderful."

Fry: And these were legionnaires?

Myer: Legionnaires.

Fry: That's amazing.





Myer: And I walked into the men's room [laugh] and everywhere it was full. They'd been waiting too. And so I'm standing there -- I shouldn't put this on the record, but anyhow -- a chap came out putting his suspenders up, you know, from one of the booths. And he looked up and he saw me, and he said, "By God, mister, I was so glad to see you give it to those sons-of-bitches." And everybody in there turned around and said, "We were too."

They felt that we had been mistreated by Chaillaux and the California group, you see. And they weren't going to have anything to do with it. So. This was one of the great breaks we got, because it did stop Chaillaux and the Americanism Committee from putting out rumors and propaganda. They had been riding us right along for months.

This was in November of '43, right after Tule Lake. You see, this made it wonderful for the California contingent, they thought, because we'd just had this Tule Lake incident and they could make capital out of it.

Fry: So that still hadn't been cleared up.

Myer: No. We'd called a press meeting for the 14th, but I had this date set up for the day before. Well, I had all the information that we had for the press, and I was set. We just were delighted when the California contingent decided to carry the ball. Senator Dick Russell was on after I was, I had known Dick throughout the years, in agriculture. And Dick got up, and with a grin, he said, "I hope you're not as rough on me as you tried to be on Mr. Myer." [laugh]

Fry: Well, that's pretty good when you can go into the dragon's own lair and really knock him out.

Myer: We'd been waiting for this opportunity. And when I found out that this chap of ours knew about the Americanism Committee and some of the people on it, the light shone. I began to see visions. And we got it done.

The final crack at the Legion, of course, was the very foolish thing that the American Legion Post up in Oregon at Hood River did. They chiselled off the names of the Japanese-Americans on the World War I monument down there in the center of town.

Fry: The war memorial monument?



Myer: The war memorial monument. And included was the name of one of the boys right from that community, who had gotten killed by snipers when he was serving on the intelligence unit out in the Pacific in this particular war. Well, of course, we started out after them on that. One of our boys, unknown to me, even tipped off the newspapers that maybe there would be a boycott against Hood River apples. That jolted them. That got out somehow or other and did jolt some of them a bit. A lot of the businessmen, you see, had signs up "No Japs allowed." Well, you know the story, finally, when I went out there about the meeting we had during the period when we were trying to relocate folks on the coast in 1945.

I went up to Hood River to meet with some of the good folks, that were on our side. And when I arrived on the scene, a man walked up to the car before I could get out and stuck out his hand and he said, "I'm Mr. Fry of the American Legion; you're Dillon Myer?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "Some of us would like to attend your meeting." And I said, "Well, it's not my meeting. As far as I'm concerned you're perfectly welcome, but I didn't call the meeting. I'm just here on request."

So they attended the meeting. And there were about twenty of them. And after I made my little speech. It wasn't too long; I just told them what our plans were for relocation, that we were getting out of business. And Mr. Fry got up, and he said, "Mr. Myer, I'd like to introduce these gentlemen." He said, "These are the fathers of soldiers who are fighting in the Pacific." And he said, "Some of them have had the yellow telegrams which they get." And he went on for a little bit on that and then said, "I would like them to vote on whether they want the Japs back in Hood River."

So I stood up immediately. I had perched myself on the edge of the table, and then I just stood up and waited him out. Then when I could get in, I said, "I would like to say a few things before we take a vote." And I turned to these gentlemen and I said, "I am sure that there's nobody in the world that understands better than you do what an Issei couple would feel like when they got one of these yellow telegrams that have been sent to a relocation center about their son." So I went on and told about the volunteers and the wonderful job they were doing. And I said, "I just can't believe that a group of fathers whose sons are fighting over there and who are being protected in part by the kind of intelligence that these Japanese-American boys are carrying out in the Pacific would want to vote on this issue. But," I said, "I'm ready for the vote." You could have heard a pin drop. There was no vote.



- Fry: Was this a community meeting that had been called?
- Myer: Mrs. Moore, who is a storekeeper up there, battled all the way through on our side. She was a wonderful lady. She and her husband had a store. And she arranged for the meeting for a few goodwill people.
- Fry: Well, it must have been a terrible strain at the time.
- Myer: Well, it wasn't a strain at the time. I was delighted to have the opportunity, but the emotion that was involved, of course, was pretty tense. Anyhow, they didn't vote, and when the meeting broke up, which it did very soon after that, you never saw a more whipped bunch of people. We passed them as we went down the street, and they were walking along with their heads down, ashamed of themselves. And that's the last we heard of the American Legion in Hood River. And, of course, when this was publicized and everything was done up there, even the California Legion went out in support of the Nisei in the army.

#### Opposition to Closing the Centers from People of Good Will

- Myer: The crazy thing is goodwill people and people who are completely at the other end of the line, often come around the circle to the same place as the opposition. When we ended up trying to get evacuees out of the centers, we had as much opposition from the goodwill people as we did from the California American Legion and the Hearst press. For different reasons. The goodwill people said you won't be able to take care of these old and crippled people and so on; you need welfare centers. You need at least two or three of them. Well, we didn't think so; we had it already worked out, but we couldn't convince them. All we did was turn the money over to the Social Security board and they worked with the welfare groups in the states and did an excellent job of taking care of people that had to have funds and some place to live. And it worked out fine. But we had a battle. They almost convinced Abe Fortas [Undersecretary of the Interior] that we shouldn't carry out our schedule of closing centers when we did. Fortunately, Harold Ickes went along with us.

The decision was postponed from along about June [1945], at the time we announced our schedule, until September. Ickes said, "We will see how it goes until September and then we'll review it." Well, when September came, we were within fifty of





Myer: the number of people we said we'd have relocated by that time. And he said, "Go ahead."

Some of the goodwill people wanted to keep the centers open and even told the evacuees not to come home. And you'll find that not only did the goodwill people buck our closing the centers, but a lot of the evacuees themselves did. And they took the stand, which was probably correct, that they were told they could be in the centers until the war with Japan was over. Thank God, it was over in August, early August, and our first camp wasn't scheduled to close until September 15th, so there was no argument there.

#### Opposition to Closing the Centers from Japanese-Americans

Myer: They had certain evacuee politicians in those centers like they have any place else, who felt the pressures of some of the folk who were scared and didn't want to go back. In February 1945, they had a meeting in Salt Lake City of thirty representatives from seven centers -- Manzanar and Tule Lake weren't represented -- and they set out twenty-one reasons why we ought to do this, that, or the other and not close the centers.

Fry: Not close the centers. And these were internees!

Myer: Yes, these were people in the centers. And if we did, there were certain things that they ought to have. They ought to be reimbursed, you see, for this, that, and the other. So we had to meet that one. I answered it one by one, and where we could agree that certain things would be done, we agreed, and when we didn't, we told them we couldn't do it, and why. And so we had to go ahead.

As a matter of fact, one of our big problems in closing the centers were the old men who had been migrant laborers all their lives and never had it so good. There were about eight thousand old bachelors, you know.

Fry: Oh, is that right?

Myer: And those old bachelors, they were largely our farm laborers at camps and at Minidoka in Idaho, for example, when I visited there for my final speech, the farm manager came up to me and said, "My folks who have their private mess out by the farm



Myer: would like to meet with you at breakfast tomorrow morning. Will you be there?" And I said, "Sure." I said, "I'll be glad to meet them." So we had a farm breakfast; I'll tell you a big one. But when the breakfast was over, it was serious business. They had a spokesman, as they always did, and the spokesman told me in no uncertain terms that they liked it there and they weren't going to leave.

They knew that if they went back, they would be migrants again. Their bones were aching and the work wasn't nearly as hard there as it was if they were working ten hours a day, you see, topping beets or picking fruit and so on. And they were pretty happy in getting as much as twelve dollars a month for spending money and all their board and room and so on, and they had security, and they didn't want to go home. And I didn't blame them. But we argued for an hour and a half. I mean, they did. And I just kept saying, "Well, I'm awfully sorry, it's going to be awfully cold here along about November or December. And there isn't going to be any mess, and there isn't going to be any coal shipped in, and there isn't going to be any of this, that, and the other, and there isn't going to be any center here, but if you stay on, you're really going to have a pretty cool reception." This is the kind of thing I had to say to these poor old chaps. Those eight thousand old bachelors who'd worked hard all their lives and whose bones had begun to ache, had the best security they'd ever had in their lives.

The old ladies, who were farmers' wives who had worked both in the fields and in the homes and got the meals, were able to have flower arrangement classes and English classes and have freedom in the meantime to visit and to do the things they'd always wanted to do. They didn't want to leave either. And it was really quite a lot of political pressure on the leaders out there to try to help keep the camps. And besides, they were afraid. They'd heard all these stories out of the Hearst press and they'd heard about the shootings and they were scared.

Fry: They felt they were in a protective environment.

Myer: Why of course. And they'd learned to live under this environment and they'd learned to like it.

Fry: I've heard sometimes that's a problem with prisoners.

Myer: Of course it is. But these people had good reasons for wanting to stay. A lot of their arguments were good and they were being



Myer: pressured by some of the goodwill people, "Don't come home."

Fry: Perhaps you can tell me why this whole removal from their home ground into the camps was accepted by the Japanese? For someone who has lived in the turbulent 60's for nine years like you and I have, it's really difficult to imagine this because if it happened now to a minority group, there would probably be a revolution.

Myer: Well, first of all, there's a book you've seen called The Quiet Americans by Bill Hosokawa. \* And there's a big battle about the title of the book on the part of some of the Nisei and the younger ones in particular, because they say it isn't typical.

But they were quiet people. They'd been living as a minority. They lived pretty much to themselves, particularly the older Issei, and they knew they were citizens of Japan, there was no argument about being aliens, you see. They could have been taken to the Justice centers as well as to ours. Some of them were. Many of the best leaders in the old Japanese community group were in Justice camps, which was one of the problems we had, the development of leadership in the camps. And the Japanese American Citizens League advised cooperation with the government once evacuation was decided on. After all, the Army was a big army; they were in control, and there wasn't much they could do about it. There was a little rebellion here and there but it didn't amount to much. Of course they accepted it. There wasn't anything else for them to do. And besides it was in their nature to accept this sort of thing.

Fry: Well, it just seems like there should have been more turmoil in the camps once they were interned.

Myer: Well, there was quite a little in Poston, Manzanar and Tule Lake.

---

\* Bill Hosokawa, Nisei: The Quiet Americans (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.), 1969





Opposition to Closing the Centers from Groups in California and Washington

Fry: Do I have an accurate picture here that the opposition about which you had to be most concerned at that time was from the liberals who had originally opposed the Japanese-American relocation?

Myer: No, it was a problem, but it wasn't that much of a problem because we had Harold Ickes. Let's put it this way. Our big opposition continued to be on the part of people who didn't want them back in California at all.

But the groups that had fought us, the Native Sons of the Golden West and others who were part of the Immigration Committee still stayed with it, and we had opposition, of course, from the Hearst press, the Los Angeles Times and other individual groups that were organized. There was a chap by the name of Dr. John Lechner, who was working for one of the Legion groups for a while. I'm sure he was getting some money from them to do it. He was a graduate of Dennison University, which is nine miles from my home in Ohio. He's dead now. But Lechner was one of those highbinders who loved to go before a group of people and hear himself make a speech, see? So he was working on the wrong side of the fence. And he was making a lot of noise.

Fry: What was his pitch?

Myer: Oh, that the Japanese people should not come back to California. Let them relocate in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, or someplace else, you see, but not out here. So we still had that kind of opposition, but the opposition on the part of the goodwill people was annoying as the devil and a bit worrisome for a time. Some of the men in the Justice Department, two or three of them, joined them and they were good friends of Abe Fortas and they got Abe to thinking that maybe, the goodwill people were right, and he was the one that went to the Secretary and asked the Secretary not to approve my trip out to the coast in June, 1945.

I'd made a date in January with Occidental College to come out and make a speech on the 19th of June. I remember the dates because it's so vivid. And this was the trip when I planned to go to Gila River relocation center [Arizona] and



Myer: make one of my visits on the breaking up of the camps. Then I was to meet Bob Cozzens in Los Angeles and make that trip up the big Valley to visit the people who'd been shot at and others. And I was going to stop at central Utah after I'd gone to San Francisco and back. And Ickes sent over a little note. He saved paper. A little orange bit of paper which said, "I don't think this is any time to be making speeches and furthermore, I'm greatly concerned about the amount of gasoline and oil you're planning to use on this trip." You see he was the Conservator of gasoline and oil. And, "Your trip that you propose is not approved."

Fry: Not approved?!

Myer: Not approved. He had a rule that you sent in your agenda for a trip three days ahead of the time you planned to start and he had a chance to look it over. Well, Abe Fortas had been to him, you see, and asked him to cancel this out because he wanted to get the Tule Lake thing settled. There was an argument in the Justice Department -- some of the men wanted to take over Tule Lake at that time; they'd made some mistakes and thought they'd better live with them instead of ourselves. And plus the fact of this business of whether we were going to keep some of the camps was still in Abe's mind. So he didn't want me to be away. He wanted to keep the argument in Washington.

Fry: It wasn't that he was afraid you'd get shot at?

Myer: No, no. Anyhow, I called up Eleanor, the secretary to the Secretary of the Interior, and I said, "I want to see your boss, and I want to see him now." and she said, "Oh, it's like that." And I said, "It's exactly like that. I'm mad." This was about 6:00 at night, you see that I got the note. She said, "What about 11:00 tomorrow morning?" And I said, "I will be there."

And I got there the next morning, and I walked in at 11:00 with this little bit of paper between my fingers. He had a long office, you know, you had to approach him like you did Mussolini. I walked in, I was holding this note between my fingers, and I walked up and laid it on the corner of his desk, and I said, "Mr. Secretary, I'd like to talk to you about this note and my plans for the trip." So he said, "I see." So I said, "I've been in the government a good many years, and I've never made a trip that I didn't think was in the interests of the government, and this one is nothing different than any that I've ever made in that respect. Now, I'll tell you just



Myer: exactly why I'm going to these various places." So I told him. He listened. And Ickes always listened. I mean, he liked to talk, but he listened. When I got through, he said, "Ok, go ahead." Well, that cracked that, you see.

And this was about the same time that Abe was trying to hold up, and did temporarily hold up, final approval by the Secretary for a schedule for closing the centers. This was in June. And this is when Ickes said, after Abe and I battled it out before him, he said, "Well, we'll see what the situation is in September, and then we'll review the situation." Well, the situation in September was just what we said it was going to be. So he said, "Ok, go ahead." So our plans didn't get stopped.

My whole point that I'm trying to make is that it was annoying to have people writing to people in the centers and saying, "Don't come back, you're liable to get hurt or get shot at." And they were scared, they believed it. Or that they ought to keep centers, you see, and putting pressure on the Secretary. It didn't hurt the Secretary, but it did affect Abe and others; they wanted to keep two or three centers. It was annoying.

Abe sent out a crew to visit the centers. Oscar Chapman, who was Assistant Secretary at that time, represented the Interior Department, and I sent Rex Lee along and John Burling, whose father was in one of the great law firms, he was in the Justice Department at that time, went along. And they visited Gila and Manzanar and heard the tale of the two project directors that didn't want to give up the camps [laugh], including Ralph Merritt. And I didn't know what was going on. I was out in the field; I was out making speeches, at the centers. But I did know Oscar Chapman -- Oscar and I were great and good friends.

Well, when he got back, Oscar made no recommendation about not closing the camps, and that was that. I mean Abe satisfied himself that he'd done his best, and that was that. So it was annoying, and it was a bit of a problem for a while, and it was worrisome because it held up, I'm sure, some movement earlier that we might have had. And they waited more or less till the last minute to go, until after the war was over in Japan, but that's all. It wasn't anything that we couldn't lick, and we did lick it.





Opposition within WRA and the Housing Problem

Myer: Rex Lee spent most of his time on the coast during these summer months of 1945 because housing was a very real problem. It was getting tougher and tougher. Soldiers and their families who had gotten out of the Army, were moving back out there. And so he was spending his time out there to work on housing and anything else on the relocation end of it. But we knew that Ralph Merritt didn't want to break up the center at Manzanar. I remember I'd talked on the phone with Rex Lee, and he said, "Dillon, don't worry about it." He said, "If it comes down to the last three weeks, we can move all those people in three weeks if need be." And that's exactly what we had to do. Ralph held out until September, and when he saw he wasn't going to make it, he began to roll people into Los Angeles by the busload and by the trainload. We had to have all kinds of Army temporary facilities which they had used, you see, all over the area. And we got them, but it was a battle to get them. In addition to the help we had from my good friend Philip Klutznick who was the head of Public Housing Administration and had all the war housing of course. And we had good help from them. But we got them all housed finally. There's one other story I'd like to tell you.

Right in the midst of this whole battle to get housing -- and there was a time when it was most crucial -- Rex and a committee that was working on our side, had set up a date to see Mayor Bowron of Los Angeles, who had been a good guy up till the time the evacuation came along, and he was on the wrong side, as Earl Warren was. Well, Bowron had a much harder time saving face than Earl Warren did; he didn't do it nearly as gracefully, and so this committee was going to see him to see what they could do about loosening him up on help. And every noted evacuee, like John Aiso and others, went in to see him. We publicized the fact that he was visited, and they just swarmed over him.

Well, anyhow, on this particular occasion, housing was so tough that we were asking for certain army facilities in some suburb. The congressman from there was opposing it because the businessmen didn't want us to have it. And the Army held us up, and they wouldn't let loose. It was just barracks, but we could use them temporarily to move families in and put in temporary dividers. And we did.



Myer: Well, I went over to the Pentagon with my briefcase -- I think I had just one man with me -- to visit General [Edward S.] Greenbaum who was McCloy's assistant, and he was in charge of this phase of it. And he had a colonel working with him who met me and in spite of the fact that I had a date with the general the colonel took over. There was a roomful of army men sitting all the way around the room, and there was just two of us, you see, and this colonel was telling me all the reasons why they couldn't do this and stalling and stalling and stalling.

Well, finally, I reached over and picked up my briefcase, and said, "Colonel, there is to be a meeting in about two hours in Mayor Bowron's office. I have told Rex Lee, my deputy out there, that I will call him before that meeting. I'm going back to the office and call him and tell him that I had a meeting scheduled with the general and the general did not show up and that I've gotten no place so that they can let the committee and the mayor know that we've had problems getting the housing that we need." Well, you never saw such a switch in your life. He threw his arms up, and he said, "Just a minute, Mr. Myer, I'll get the general." He got on the telephone and he got the general and in less than a minute, the general was there, and he walked in very calmly, and sat down up front and looked at me and he said, "Mr. Myer, I understand you and the colonel had some differences of opinion, would you like to tell me about it?" And I said, "Well, maybe the colonel would like to talk first." He said, "I think you deserve the opportunity to talk first." The colonel never did get a chance to talk [laugh].

I took about ten minutes to tell him what our problems were and what we wanted this housing for, it was temporary, and about the meeting with the mayor and with the committee who were in support of this whole program out there, and the fact that I thought the Army owed us a little something in view of the fact that they had evacuated these people originally, to help us get them settled back where they belonged. And when I got through, he said, "OK, you can have the housing."

You know, it's this kind of thing that we went through time and again, the difference between success and failure is often paper thin. Well, this was one of them. I'll always look back on that with great pleasure. I can see that colonel yet. The general was a nice chap. He was intelligent, and he didn't hesitate; he didn't even ask the colonel for his opinion, he just settled it. In other words, he had tried to stall it off, but it didn't work, so he said, "OK, you can have them."



Fry: Well, then, Ralph Merritt's position was just that he liked it up there in the Owens Valley?

Myer: Ralph Merritt was in love with the Owens Valley, and Ralph Merritt had the time of his life at Manzanar, after the big blow-up in December had gotten settled down. He had one of the best valets that anybody ever had, an old Issei who had been somebody's valet. And he could throw parties for visiting people, and Ralph could really do a job. And he was a good administrator, and he knew he had things under control, and he did. Oh, he did a wonderful job from that standpoint; as far as running a center and keeping it on an even keel, he was probably the best that I had in the way of administrative authority. But he didn't want to leave the Owens Valley, he didn't want to leave that spot he had up there where he had all kinds of help for Mrs. Merritt, and he just wasn't going to do it. He thought that these goodwill people would finally prevail and that Manzanar would be one of the places selected to remain open.

Fry: Can you tell me about the speech that you made at Manzanar to explain your plans for closing the center?

Myer: Well, as usual, I went to Manzanar, as I did all the other centers, to meet with the staff and with the evacuees to tell them about the fact that we were closing out and what our schedule was and what we were doing about the relocation and helping those that needed help to get on welfare and getting jobs, etc., etc. Well, when I got through with my speech, some fairly mature lady who was one of the staff out there sitting up on the front row, got up and said, "Mr. Myer" -- and she almost had tears in her voice -- "Mr. Myer, what are you going to do when that date comes that you say the center has to be closed and the people are still here?" I said, "They aren't going to be here. That's no problem, because we're going to close it, and I think these people are going to understand that by the time the time comes, and we're just not going to talk about that because we're going to close the centers by that date, and if there's anybody around here, they're going to be very destitute because there aren't going to be any facilities for their mess and all the things they're supposed to have." So I answered it that way. And Ralph Merritt got up and said, "Well, we do have a problem, and I'm not so sure that the center's going to close on that date." So he made his little speech. So I got up again, and I said, "Let's not have any misunderstanding about this. The center is going to close by the date I have suggested. There aren't going to be any facilities here for taking care of people after that date. And let's quit arguing about it."





Fry: But he waited till the last twenty days?

Myer: He didn't move, but he finally helped to move people out in the last three weeks, which he could have done earlier. He really loaded us up in Los Angeles, but we got the job done. Rex was right. In three weeks' time we took care of most of them.

Fry: Well, I really do thank you for coming down to talk with us again.

Myer: You're very welcome. As I told you yesterday, this is one of the things that is no problem with me. I can talk about this all day and all night, almost, because there's a lot of nostalgia involved, and of course it was a period when -- oh, so many things happened, you know.

Final Typist: Wendy Won



## INDEX -- Dillon Myer

- Agricultural Adjustment Administration, U.S. (AAA) 1-2, 7
- agriculture interests 4
- Alien Land Law 6-7, 37
- American Civil Liberties Union 37
- American Friends Service Committee 20
- American Legion 5, 8-9, 11, 13-14, 17, 34, 40-45, 49
- Army, U.S. 13-14, 16-18, 24, 27-29, 32, 34, 39, 52-53
  - 442nd Regimental Combat Team 13, 28-30, 38
  - 100th battalion 29
- Baker, John 21
- Barrows, Leland 1
- Barth, Alan 35
- Beck, Dave 39
- Bendetsen, General Karl R. 20, 27, 35
- Best, Ray 29
- Biddle, Francis 10
- Bledsoe, Sam 2
- Bowron, Fletcher 9, 52-53
- Bricker, John 34
- Budget, U.S. Bureau of 2
- Burling, John 51
- California, State of
  - Attorney General 38
  - Farm bureau 4
- Carberry, Jack 17-18
- Chaillaux, Homer 14, 42-43
- Chapman, Oscar 51
- Chinese Exclusion Act 8
- civil liberties 26-27
- Clark, Tom 10, 17
- Collier, John 22-23
- Commonwealth Club of San Francisco 40
- Community organization 32
- Congress, U.S.
  - House Committee on Interstate Migration (Tolan Committee) 12-13
- Costello, John 14
- Cozzens, Robert B. 11, 38-39, 50
- Cross, Frank 42
- Davis, Elmer 19
- Davis, Lawrence 18
- Denver Post 17



De Witt, General John 9-10, 27, 34, 35  
 Dies Committee (House Special Committee to Investigate UnAmerican Activities) 13-14  
 Drum, Hugh A. 34  
  
 Eastern Defense Command 34  
 Eisenhower, Dwight 20  
 Eisenhower, Milton 1-3, 21-22  
 elections, 1948, 33  
 Emmons, General Delos Carleton 35  
 Endo case 26  
 evacuation order 32-33, 38  
 Evans, "Spike" 2  
  
 Fahey, Charles 26-27  
 Fair Play Committee (Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play) 41  
 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 23-25  
 Fisher, Galen 41, 51  
 Fisterere, Harold 31  
 Ford, Leland 5  
 Fortas, Abe 45, 49-50  
 fraternal organizations 5, 39  
  
 Gila River relocation center 49, 51  
 Glick, Philip 1  
 Governor's Conference  
     of 1942, 21  
     of 1943, 11  
 Grange, the California State 4  
 Greenbaum, Edward S. 53  
  
 Head, Wade 23  
 Hearst newspapers 3, 7, 17, 33-34, 41, 45, 47, 49  
 Heart Mountain relocation center 31  
 Holland, Tom 1, 20-22, 31  
 Hood River incident 43-44  
 Hosokawa, William 48  
 housing 52-53  
 Hughes, John B. 5  
  
 Ickes, Harold L. 35, 45, 49-50  
 Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, 37  
 Inouye, Daniel 26  
 Interior Department, U.S. 49-51  
     Bureau of Indian Affairs 22  
 Internal Security Act of 1950, 26





Jackson, Justice Robert H. 26  
 Japanese American Citizens' League 27, 29, 48  
 Job Corps, U.S. 20-21  
 Justice Department, U.S. 10, 12, 49, 51  
     internment camps 25, 48

Katcher, Leo 9-11, 33  
 Kido, Saburo 29  
 Kingman, Harry 41  
 Kingman, Ruth 40-41  
 Kinney, Bob 37  
 Kiwanis Club 5, 39  
 Klutznick, Philip 52  
 Korematsu case 26  
 Kress, Erle 1

labor, organized 21, 39  
 law enforcement 8-9, 24, 35, 39  
 Lechner, John 49  
 Lee, Rex 31-32, 51-52, 53, 55  
 Legislature, California 37  
 Lions Club 5  
 "loaded weapon opinion" 26  
Los Angeles Times 3, 5, 36, 41, 49

McClatchy newspapers 3-9, 41  
 McCloy, John 33, 39, 53  
 Manzanar relocation center 16, 23-25, 48, 51-53  
 Masaoka, Mike 6, 13, 27, 29  
 Merritt, Ralph 51-54  
 Meyer, Eugene 35  
 Moore, Wallace 39

Native Sons of the Golden West 7, 9, 49  
 newspapers (see also under names) 3, 11, 15-16, 18, 41  
New York Times 18

Occidental College 49  
 Ohio State University 3  
 O'Mahoney, Joe 13  
 O'Neal, Jimmy 42

Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play 41  
 Pickett, Clarence 14, 20  
 Placer County incident 35, 38  
 politics, state 7-8  
 Poston relocation center 14, 16, 23, 25, 48  
 Powers, Bob 35  
 Province, John 1  
 public relations, political 8, 11-12, 15, 17-19, 30, 32, 37-44, 51, 52, 54



racial attitudes 7, 9, 37  
 radio, political role of 13  
 Republican Party 33  
 Roosevelt, Eleanor 13  
 Roosevelt, Franklin D. 13  
 Ross, Constance 31-32  
 Rotary Club 5, 39  
 Rowalt, Elmer 1  
 Rowe, James, Jr. 12  
 Russell, Dick 43

San Francisco Chronicle 18  
 Senate, U.S. 13-14  
 Shields, Bob 2  
 shipping industry 5  
 Slocum, "Tokie" (Tokutaro Nishimoto) 25  
 Smith, Harold 2  
 Social Security Administration 36, 45  
 Soil Conservation District Act 7  
 Soil Conservation Service, U.S. 1-3, 7  
 Sproul, Robert Gordon 40  
 Stettinius, Edward R. 33  
 Stimson, Henry 13, 32-34  
 Stripling, Robert 14  
 Supreme Court, U.S. 10, 26-27, 34, 37

Teamster's Union 39  
 Thomas, J. Parnell 14  
 Tolan Committee (House Committee on Interstate Migration) 12-13  
 Townshend, Mr. 14-15  
 Tozier, Morrill 21-22, 42  
 Tule Lake relocation center 16, 18, 24, 27-30, 40, 43, 48, 50

University of California 40  
 Utz, E. J. 1

Wallgren, Mon 13  
 War Information, Office of (OWI) 19  
 War Relocation Authority (WRA) 1, passim  
 Warren, Earl 4, 8-12, 16-17, 24, 33-34, 52  
     speeches of 9-11  
Washington Post 35  
 Webb, Ulysses Sigel 4  
 Western Defense Command 10, 33-34  
 Western Growers Protective Association 4  
 Wickard, Claude Raymond 2  
 Wilbur, William 35



"Yellow Peril," the 7, 9

YMCA 41

YWCA 40









The Bancroft Library

University of California/Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office

Earl Warren Oral History Project

Ruth W. Kingman

THE FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

An Interview Conducted by

Rosemary Levenson





SEPT 1972

Ruth Kingman  
September 1972





TABLE OF CONTENTS -- Ruth Kingman

INTERVIEW HISTORY	1
I. EARLY YEARS	1
<u>Childhood and School Days in California</u>	1
<u>Marriage in China</u>	3
<u>Conducting the Messiah in Tientsin: 1926</u>	4
II. WORLD WAR II AND THE JAPANESE EVACUATION	7
<u>Community Help for Local Evacuees</u>	7
<u>Humanizing the "Processing" of Evacuees</u>	9
<u>Tanforan</u>	12
<u>University of California Commencement, 1942:</u> <u>Harvey Itano, Valedictorian, in absentia.</u>	14
<u>Student Relocation</u>	16
<u>Christmas at Topaz: the Messiah again</u>	16
III. THE FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE	24
<u>Origins of the Fair Play Committee</u>	24
<u>Leadership of the Committee</u>	25
<u>Objectives and Policies of the Committee</u>	26
<u>Public Relations Program Undertaken</u>	28
<u>The Committee and Governor Warren</u>	32a
<u>The Committee and the Federal Government</u>	33
<u>Visit to Camp Shelby</u>	36
IV. THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY AND THE COMMUNITY	41
<u>WRA Public Relations</u>	41
<u>Pressures on President Sproul as Honorary Chairman</u> <u>of the Fair Play Committee</u>	44



V.	CHANGING TIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION	49
	<u>Sergeant Ben Kuroki Speaks to the Commonwealth Club</u>	49
	<u>President Sproul Speaks in Los Angeles</u>	53
	<u>Attitudes of the Press</u>	55
VI.	THE RETURN	59
	<u>Fair Play Committee Policy on Resettlement</u>	59
	<u>Resettlement in Berkeley: Jane Davis</u>	63
	<u>Effects of Relocation on Japanese-American Attitudes</u>	66
	<u>Palace Hotel Conference on Long-Term Strategy</u>	67
VII.	CONCLUSIONS	69
	<u>Studies of Social Scientists</u>	69
	<u>Culture and Character as Factors in Successful Resettlement</u>	70
	<u>Insights into Race Prejudice</u>	74
APPENDIX A:	Eleanor D. Breed, "War Comes to the Church Door: Diary of a Church Secretary in Berkeley, Calif., April 20 to May 1, 1942.	75
APPENDIX B:	Sergeant Ben Kuroki, "Japanese-American Aviator Tells of Famed Ploesti Raid." An address given before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, February 4, 1944.	90
APPENDIX C:	Dr. Robert Gordon Sproul, "The Test of a Free Country...." An address given before the California Club in Los Angeles, June 20, 1944.	93
INDEX		97



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

Ruth Kingman was interviewed by the Regional Oral History Office in order to record her contribution to the battle for the protection and preservation of the constitutional rights of Japanese-Americans during and after World War II. Her services as Executive Secretary of the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play were recognised and honored by the Japanese American Citizens League and commended by Dillon Myer, the Director of the War Relocation Authority. In listing acknowledgments to those who contributed to the success of the WRA, Mr. Myer says, "Mrs. Ruth Kingman, executive officer of the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, did yeoman service in organizing local committees and in providing ways and means for breaking down or offsetting efforts of the exclusionist groups up and down the West Coast. In addition, Ruth and her husband Harry were valued counselors of mine and of WRA generally throughout the war."\*

### Conduct of the Interview

Four interviews were held in February, 1971. The first three took place in the Kingmans' charming house in Berkeley. The fourth, on February 18th, was held in the reading room of The Bancroft Library, sotto voce, as we looked over some of the papers from the voluminous records of the Fair Play Committee which had been donated to The Bancroft and which Ruth had not seen for twenty-five years. Ruth briefly sketched in her childhood in California, university experiences, and early married life in China, including a description of a dramatic rendition of the Messiah which she conducted in Tientsin in the midst of a War Lord battle.

She then proceeded to describe the climate of opinion, acutely hostile to and fearful of Japanese-Americans, in California which was a powerful agent influencing the federal decision to evacuate all Japanese-Americans from the three Western states. (It should be noted that no such action was taken against the Japanese-Americans in Hawaii.) By the middle of 1941, the situation had become so bad that a group of prominent Californians, led by General David P. Barrows,\* a former president of the University of California, organised a small group of influential citizens

---

\*Dillon S. Myer, Uprooted Americans: The Japanese Americans and the War Relocation Authority during World War II. (University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1971) p. xix.

\*\*An interview with Ella Barrows Hagar, daughter of General Barrows, is in process by the Regional Oral History Office.





to act as a counter-pressure group to the various hate groups. This was the nucleus of the Fair Play Committee which continued in operation from 1941-1946. The Committee did not publicly oppose the evacuation once it had been announced, but worked with government agencies to try to humanize the effects of it as much as possible. It lobbied for actions such as the formation of the famous Nisei Regiment, the 442nd, and for relocation of Japanese-Americans out of the camps to other parts of the United States. It actively worked to improve the attitude of Californians to Japanese-Americans by all available means. Ruth Kingman was the working member of the Committee who, almost single-handedly, did the job of correspondence, organization, travel, and care and feeding of Japanese-American servicemen when they were finally permitted to travel through California.

The interview sessions at the Kingmans were interrupted by a pause for coffee and cookies and enjoyment of the Berkeley view. The house is enhanced by Ruth's paintings and memorabilia such as the hand-carved plaque presented to her at Topaz Relocation Center after she conducted a Christmas pageant there to an autographed portrait of President Kennedy. After the interview was finished, there would be a glass of sherry and a sandwich.

The interviews were transcribed, edited by the interviewer for continuity, substantially revised and improved by Ruth, final-typed, proofed, and indexed. Later, it was the interviewer's privilege to do a full length memoir of Harry Kingman in which Ruth actively participated. A fuller picture of the remarkable achievements of the Kingman partnership can be found in the Harry Kingman memoir, "Citizenship in a Democracy," 1973, than in this account of one major contribution made by Ruth Kingman to the cause of civil rights.

Rosemary Levenson  
Interviewer-Editor

1 June 1973  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
University of California, Berkeley



## I EARLY YEARS

### Childhood and School Days in California

Levenson: I'd like to know about your early life -- I see that you were born in 1900.

Kingman: Yes, I was born in 1900, just about sixty miles from here, in Los Gatos, the city of the cats. My father was a Methodist clergyman. My mother was born in California also. She was born in a small town very close to Davis, near Sacramento. I don't think it's there any more. It used to be called Black's Station. Her father later lived in Shasta County where he owned vast stretches of land, feeding a great herd of cattle.

I went to school in northern California -- I think I was in eleven schools, moving from one town to another.

Levenson: Why did your father move so much?

Kingman: Well, in those days the Methodist ministers were moved almost every year. The longest I ever lived in any place was three years and that was when I was in high school. Even so, I was in three high schools altogether, and finally graduated from old Mission High School in San Francisco. I'd lived all over northern California -- lived in the Sacramento Valley, up on the coast in Eureka, lived in Woodland, Grass Valley, and in Jackson, in the gold country.

My grandfather came out to California after the Civil War, a wounded veteran. He also was a preacher and I remember the great stories he had to tell -- such as when he would be preaching against the demon rum and be holding forth in a room up above the saloon that the saloon-keeper had given him to preach in because it was the only place large enough to hold the congregation.



Kingman: My father was what they called a circuit rider. He was stationed in little tiny towns -- up in Crescent City for instance, in Del Norte County, where he would ride hundreds of miles on horseback, into the mountains, giving religious help, advice, guidance, and service for weddings and funerals to the people who lived there, who could not get to town. Before I was born, my mother and my father spent one year in the Hawaiian Islands (they called it the Sandwich Islands) as missionaries.

Levenson: Where did your grandfather come from?

Kingman: Iowa. My paternal grandfather was from Iowa. My mother's family came from Virginia where there was originally the French Huguenot immigration to America. Her name was Maupin, but it was never pronounced properly here. It was pronounced 'Moppin' but, being French, was spelled properly, Maupin! My grandfather Maupin was reputed to have been active in several of the more bloody and tenacious mountain feuds of his time. We never asked him how he had happened to come west!

Levenson: Was there ever any discussion of race prejudice at home?

Kingman: At home, as a child, I wasn't raised with any degree of race prejudice of any kind. I think that if I had ever shown any degree of race prejudice I would have been punished, I mean probably physically punished.

I remember that there were some little Negro girls in school with me up in Chico. There were only about two black families there, I think. And I remember this one little girl used to pass my house every morning, and once my father asked me if I knew her at school and I said, "Yes, I do." And he said, "Well, does she ever walk home from school with you?" I said, "Yes, sometimes." "Well, do you ever see her at school?" "I don't know," because it hadn't crossed my mind. And he said, "Well, I think it would be nice if you'd walk home with her some day." And, I remember looking at my father and him looking at me and not saying another word, but all of a sudden I knew what he meant. And in my recollection that's the first time I can remember ever being conscious of any such thing as race prejudice.

Levenson: About how old were you then?

Kingman: Ten, eleven, something like that. I don't remember any minority members in any school prior to that. I remember our





Kingman: Chinese vegetable man, his queue and the wonderful lichee nuts and candy he gave us. Things like that. But I don't remember any children, certainly no black children. Of course, when I got into San Francisco schools, then right away I ran into many Orientals, but very, very few blacks. And of course the University had many Orientals but I don't remember ever seeing a black student. There may have been a few, but they could be counted on one hand.

Levenson: Would you say it was a hard life, always moving around?

Kingman: Well part of it was hard. I can very definitely remember waking up in the night and longing to see some of my old friends, my friends that I'd left behind, because I did make friends easily and had many friends in school. I never thought about that when it came time to leave. But after I had gone, many, many times I would cry in the night, wishing I could see my friends. But other than that there was no hardship. Going from school to school was sort of an expected thing for Methodist ministers' families. And the teachers always gave me a break so I got along all right. I had a little difficulty with mathematics, never could add because of it, but I think that was about all. I graduated from the College of the Pacific (it's now a university) where I studied music, after having my first two years at the University of California.

Levenson: In Berkeley?

Kingman: Yes, in Berkeley. I turned things around. I went from the large school to the small one instead of from the small one to the large but I wanted to specialize. And at that time the University of California had -- really didn't have a music department that was first rate. That was a long time ago, because I graduated in 1922.

### Marriage in China

Levenson: And how did you meet your husband?

Kingman: Oh, he was the director -- no, he was then the youngest member of the Stiles Hall staff, the University YMCA. I was a sophomore at the University. I met him several times on campus after he saw me in a small part in an English Club play in the Greek Theater. He heard me sing the Marseillaise at the French Ball in old Harmon Gym, and later at the University YWCA in a program he arranged.



Kingman: Later that year (1920) I met him again at Asilomar, near Pacific Grove, where my father was serving the local Methodist Church. A few months later Harry left for China, where he was to be stationed for six years under the direction of the International Committee of the Student YMCA. When I graduated from college in 1922, I sailed for China -- a twenty-eight day voyage -- and we were married in Shanghai.

Levenson: When you were in China, what was Mr. Kingman doing?

Kingman: Well, he did pretty much the same thing as he did here at Stiles Hall -- worked with students. The program included the various activities well described in the Oral History tapes now being recorded by him.\*

Levenson: In China, you were there at a, well one shouldn't say at a peculiarly difficult time, but certainly a difficult time.

Kingman: Yes, it was -- much more difficult than can be gone into satisfactorily in this study of the Japanese American Relocation. Once again, let me refer you to the taping now being done by Harry, who goes into considerable documented detail.\*

#### Conducting the Messiah in Tientsin: 1926

Kingman: However, one incident occurs to me which could be related, many years later, to some of my activities during the relocation of persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast. It was after our move to Tientsin, where I had become active in the musical life of that port city. Having been asked by the leaders of the foreign community to arrange a Christmas program, and having consulted with a score or so of international music lovers in north China, I decided that we could present a respectable performance of Handel's "Messiah."

It was in 1926, at Christmas time, December 23rd. I had a very interesting chorus of about a hundred people, made up from eleven nationalities including Chinese and Japanese, American, German, English, Lithuanian, Italian -- I've forgotten who else but I remember that there were eleven nationalities represented. And it was a particularly difficult period.

---

\* See interview with Harry Kingman, "Citizenship in a Democracy," Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.



Kingman: Tientsin was under siege at the time, by the so-called Christian General, Feng Yü-hsiang and his army. Feng was a Christian from the point of view of the Chinese Christian Church, and was a devout man. The whole of north China at that time was divided between war lords, and each had his own army. As Tientsin was under siege by Feng Yü-hsiang there was some question as to whether my orchestra could turn up, the reason being that my fifty or sixty-piece group was made up mostly of Filipinos from the American army band, and siege conditions and orders prevailed. General George C. Marshall (at that time he was Col. Marshall) was in command of the U.S. troops in Tientsin and had given me permission to ask the orchestra if they would accompany the chorus for the "Messiah." They were delighted to do so.

But there was a question of whether they could get to the performance or not, because of the siege, so we had to have special orders and special consent and special everything. But they were all there on the big night, and the performance went along very, very satisfactorily. We had an English soprano, a Welsh tenor, a Scottish baritone, an American contralto, and an American bass. That was it. None of them was really professional, although they all had beautiful voices and were experienced singers and fine musicians.

As we stood up there, singing away, we were all wondering what was happening outside the walls of the city. We knew that something was happening. But we didn't know what.

Levenson: Could you hear gunfire?

Kingman: Oh yes. You could hear it all the time. Just very faintly. And then I remember the Hallelujah Chorus. As you know, much of the dramatic timing of that Chorus depends on the conductor. Well, all music does but in this particular Chorus, because of all the Hallelujahs it is particularly dependent on the conductor's interpretation. You may remember that just before the final Hallelujah there's quite a pause, the length depending upon how the conductor feels about the whole thing. It had gone beautifully -- the chorus was just singing its heart out. It was beautiful and the audience had all stood up -- all properly, according to tradition -- for the Hallelujah Chorus and there were hundreds of people in attendance and everybody listening and loving every minute of it. And it came up to the 'Hallelujah, Hallelujah' and then the pause -- and during the pause came "Boom!" A cannon had gone off just outside of the city but it felt as if it was just outside the building. Everybody kind of shuddered, I swung the baton, and the chorus came in for the final "Hal-le-lu-jah." I remember that so well. Wow!





Kingman: The next night, incidentally, in case you're interested, many of the people who were in that chorus were also in the American military and general community church choir. I happened to be conducting the choir and was soloist. Everyone wanted to go carol singing. The snow was deep on the ground and the Chinese shops were all boarded up because the city was under siege. As this was the twenty-fourth of December, we went to a midnight service at the chapel, an Army chapel, and from there we went out singing carols at different places. But in order to get my men in uniform to go with us (because some of them were in the choir too -- both enlisted men and officers), and in order for them to be out of barracks, we had to get special permission. We got that permission provided they would wear their side arms, which seemed a little incongruous but all right, they wore their side arms. And we went out.

The other stipulation was that there would be a rider who went on a motorcycle between the sentries, American sentries, at the gates and wherever we were to keep in touch, as we would now with walkie-talkies. They had to know where we were all the time, so that if they had to, they could call the men to duty.

They weren't so much worried about us but they wanted to be able to get the men, you see. The carolling went on for a long time. We went from place to place and it was great fun. We loved singing. It was cold, I remember, below zero, but we loved singing and finally one of the riders who came in on the motorcycles rode up and said, "You won't believe this. You absolutely won't believe it but I swear it's true." And we found out later it was true -- really. He said he had got to the gate where the sentries were and that Feng's men were just outside and (you'll remember, he was a Christian, and as a Christian general he made all his men go to church, too) Feng and his men were sitting around campfires singing the same carols as we were!

Levenson: Isn't that something.

Kingman: In Chinese! The American men had recognized the tunes, sometimes pretty badly garbled but they said they knew "Silent Night, Holy Night" when they heard it. And so there we were, inside and outside of the wall and naturally I thought of that many years later when I was in Topaz with the Japanese - American evacuees.



## II WORLD WAR II AND THE JAPANESE EVACUATION

### Community Help for Local Evacuees

Levenson: Now that we've mentioned the Japanese-American evacuees, may we discuss some of the events that led up to evacuation? I am interested to know a bit about what you and other Berkleyans did during that troublesome period, and why you did it.

Kingman: The reason I got into any of this? I was talking to Bob Okamatsu who was on my husband's staff at the University YMCA. His parents had just been ordered out of their home in Alameda, which was the first area to be evacuated. (Bob is now working in a large grocery firm, in an administrative position, in the Middle West.) His family, his mother and father, two brothers and a sister, no, one brother and sister, were all very devout and active members of the Baptist Church and while his parents didn't speak any English at all, they went regularly to the Japanese Baptist Church.

I think it was probably because of that that I made a reference that I did in talking to Bob. I asked him if the people in the Baptist Church had indicated any wish to help his parents or anybody. And he said, "No, I suppose it's too soon." Or something like that, I don't remember exactly what he said. But I remember definitely saying to him, "Well, Bob what can the church people do? Do you think there is something they should do?" And he looked at me and he said, "Ruth, I think they've got to either put up or shut up."

I don't know how long it was after that -- I think probably the next day, it might have been the same day, I don't know -- I was talking to Mrs. Eric Bellquist, whose husband was on campus in the Political Science department, and who had testified



Kingman: for the Tolan Committee in behalf of loyal persons of Japanese ancestry in relation to a possible evacuation. Mrs. Bellquist and I discussed it, and we decided that certainly somebody ought to do something about helping those old people. Do two things. One, find a place for them to stay in the next zone, until they could find out what they wanted to do. Because this was an immediate thing. It had to be done right away, and then, help them with some of their personal belongings. Many of them didn't have children who were Nisei, didn't have anybody. And they were losing their household goods, for instance selling beautiful refrigerators for one dollar. You know, that sort of thing. And we felt that inasmuch as they had practically nothing they could take with them, were in a hurry and had no place to go, that was the first thing we could do -- find them places to go.

So we got together a representative group of young students, university students -- about half of them I would say, were from Stiles Hall, the University YMCA and the other half from the University YWCA. Lillie Margaret Sherman was the director of the YWCA and my husband Harry was the director of Stiles Hall. We talked to them and asked them if they thought it was a good project. They thought it was.

So, after planning it with the students, who, in turn, enlisted as many more students as they wanted or felt they needed, they then canvassed the entire southwest Berkeley area where Japanese-Americans or Japanese lived and the houses next to those houses where they might have been known. Because this was the second zone it was still open. The students tried to see if there were rooms where some of these old people could stay until they could find other places in the next zone. I don't know now, and I don't think we ever even kept track of how many were placed; but I would say there wasn't anyone who left that first prohibited area who wanted a place to stay that we couldn't place. And, as far as their possessions were concerned, that didn't seem to amount to very much. We didn't have to do very much about that until the next order came which cleared everybody out of Berkeley. They had to go back further into the state or further east still. Then personal property was a problem. And so we began scurrying around trying to find safe storage space. And this is where we went to church groups, asking if they had basements or attics where these things -- just personal things, paper, clothes, and whatever -- could be stored until the evacuees could send for them. And we insisted upon three copies of lists -- everything being made available to us. We kept one copy and one copy went to the Army and one copy went to the evacuee. So that was the way it was. Our copies





Kingman: were kept in the safe of the First Congregational Church for years until I think they were thrown out because there was no point in keeping them any longer.

Then it wasn't very long until the order came for complete evacuation and the Berkeley people were ordered to Tanforan. All they could take was what would fit in one suitcase per person. Some of them had lived here all their lives. There were University students; there were doctors, nurses, lawyers, businessmen, as well as gardeners, maids, cooks, everything. Everything but blue-collar. I think there were no blue-collar evacuees. As far as I know, they were either white-collar or laborers. The laborers mostly were the Issei (Japan born). They had sent their children to college so the Nisei were pretty much white-collar. But they could carry only a suitcase, so we had to hurry around and find storage places for their other belongings.

Well, we did. Through the churches and through the women's faculty group -- not as such, but women on the campus -- wives of faculty members. We found basements and attics for the property of hundreds of families. Literally hundreds of families. And some of those things were kept carefully clear through the entire war till they came back. Others, upon request, were sent to their owners wherever they were. And then later, when the evacuees began to come back, but still didn't have any place to go, they would sometimes come and get some of their belongings a little at a time.

#### Humanizing the "Processing" of Evacuees

Levenson: How did you first become actively involved with the Evacuation?

Kingman: I didn't like the idea of our Berkeley people being processed, as they say, by the Army in the big warehouses where they had thought they were going to have to do it. And, because it was a large group, and they had to have physical exams, and have their personal property evaluated, they had to have all sorts of things done before they were sent to Tanforan. So they all had to spend one or two days in the processing place before they were ready to go in the big busses that took them away. So I got in touch with the civilian group that was arranging this for the Army. It was the United States Employment Service, the



# **A STATEMENT**



Berkeley Fellowship of Churches  
and  
The First Congregational Church  
of Berkeley  
to  
Japanese Friends and Fellow  
Americans

The First Congregational Church of Berkeley offers its building, and the Protestant Churches of Berkeley extend their hospitality to you in these days of evacuation. The church proffers the facilities of its parish house for your convenience, happy to render this patriotic service. The Federal authorities requested the use of this building, feeling that it offered the best possible opportunity to make the burdens of this trying time easier for you. We rejoice in this consideration on the part of our government, and feel privileged to be able to assist by giving our facilities without charge.

Many of us personally know of the loyalty to the United States of many of you who must now move from our community. It has been a loyalty which you have maintained under difficult circumstances, and we want you to know of our understanding. The service which you now render to America is the loss, for the duration, of your homes. We rejoice to know that many of you are facing it in the same spirit in which others are facing the possible loss of their sons, for much longer than the duration.

The Protestant Churches of Berkeley, during this period, will extend hospitality to you, a differ-

nt denominational group being in charge each day.

The Reception Room of the Church, marked **BERKELEY CHURCH HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE** will be open for your comfort and convenience, with hosts and hostesses present who will extend any courtesy which will be of value to you.

The **KINDERGARTEN ROOM** in the basement will serve as a day nursery where your small children may be left while you are busy with the government officials. We hope to have Japanese friends among those on duty, to make all the children feel at home.

On the second floor is the **LOUNGE**, where those who are waiting for others of their family may rest, with chairs provided and refreshments (no charge) at all hours. Cots are available for those who need or desire them. The hostess in the Lounge will direct you to them.

This statement comes to you with two signatures. One is given under the instruction of the Church Council of the First Congregational Church, which includes representatives of every Board, Committee and Organization of the church. The other was authorized by the unanimous vote of the Protestant clergy of Berkeley meeting as the Berkeley Fellowship of Churches, the ministers in so far as they may act for their parishes, believing that every Berkeley Protestant Church

would enthusiastically approve this statement if there were time to meet and take action.

We have a deep and profound love for the United States, which we are eager to express in this opportunity to work along with the government. Our program has been projected with the knowledge and approval of government authorities, but it is offered entirely through the initiative and under the direction of the Berkeley churches. The church people must of necessity strictly separate themselves from governmental procedure, but we hope we can offer something of value to you in Christian hospitality. Our efforts will be a way for your Berkeley friends to say at least that *we believe in you*. We hope they may increase your love for your community and the United States.

*"May God bless you and keep you . . . both on you going out and on your coming in"*

BERKELEY FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES

U. S. MITCHELL, *President*

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF  
BERKELEY

VERE V. LOPER, *Minister*

April 24, 1942.



Kingman: California Employment Service at that time. Margery Walker was the director of it here in Berkeley. I got in touch with her, and through her with Richard Neustadt who was the overall supervisor of the whole area. I asked him if it wouldn't be possible for us to find a place that was a little bit warmer -- a little bit less impersonal, a little bit less brutal than a warehouse. So many of the women and children had to be there for long hours. He said, "Well yes, if you can find any such place. If the War Department, if the Army doesn't mind, I don't mind." So that meant that I had to get in touch with the Army people. Which I did. And they said, "What do you have in mind?" I said, "Well as far as Berkeley is concerned, how about getting the part of the First Congregational Church that is not the sanctuary, the part that has the Sunday school rooms and where they have their church dinners? They asked, "How many doors are there?" They wanted to know about security. And I said, "Well, come and look."

Meantime, I had to get permission from the Church, which was not easy. The pastor, the Rev. Vere Loper was fine. He had to put it up to his board of trustees, and I understand that while it was not unanimously supported permission was definitely given, with the understanding that everyone would stay out of the sanctuary. This, of course, made good sense. And there was nothing discriminatory about it, it just made good sense, that's all. So, it was arranged that it was to be done there.\*

Then the Army took over and it was really hectic because they had to divide the place up into little cubicles and put up walls and tables and all sorts of things -- temporary of course. One whole corner was given over to the Nisei doctors and nurses who were giving physicals to everybody before they left. Giving shots -- no, they didn't give shots to everybody -- we had to have that done down at Herrick Hospital by Nisei doctors and nurses.

But anyway, it became obvious when the thing was getting set up, that there were going to be hours and hours of sitting. Hours and hours of waiting around. And what the young mothers were going to do, I didn't know. Then we got the happy thought of having nursery schools set up. So we organized child-care, partly through the church Sunday school groups and partly through

---

See Appendix 1. "War Comes to the Church Door. Diary of a Church Secretary in Berkeley, California, April 20 to May 1, 1942." Eleanor D. Breed. Typescript.



Kingman: the student YWCA. They manned a little nursery in one good-sized Sunday school room. Of course it was a godsend for the young Nisei mothers who could go through all this business without youngsters hanging on.

And of course when you had child care, you had to give cookies and milk to these little youngsters, which we did. And then, after all, you couldn't have cookies and milk for the youngsters and not have tea for the oldsters. So, not all the days, but on the days when a group was processed and ready to go on the bus, because they went in series -- processed by busful, on the day they left, we had tea and doughnuts for every person that got on a bus.

Well, after we got that started here in Berkeley, it was well thought of and the Army was delighted with it. They thought it was great. (Of course some of them thought it was crazy.) It was fine, they didn't have any objection to it at all.

It was always a bit startling for us to come up to the door of the church, the entry of the processing place, because there were always two uniformed men on guard duty just outside the door with a big flag and carrying guns. It seemed rather strange but it was interesting because around them little Japanese youngsters were playing. And the guards would play with them as much as they could without losing their dignity. But anyway, it was not a bad scene. And someone suggested why don't we try to do this in some of the other cities in the evacuation area?

So I went down to Fresno -- I don't know how I financed the trip. I might have paid my own way, I don't know, but I don't think so. Probably some interested people on campus or boards of directors of the Y's gave something. Anyway, I went down and was there for two or three days meeting with church groups. These were almost exclusively church groups. And, once again, at Fresno State there were the student YM and YW. We set up very much the same kind of thing as here in Berkeley -- not necessarily in a church but in a good place -- not out in barns, some place where the Army would naturally go because of their availability and size. Because that was what they usually did, and there was no military reason why they shouldn't. And we also arranged to have child care and always food when the evacuees started to the Reception Center. That was definite.



Kingman: I remember I had a bet with one of the Nisei leaders, a Methodist minister, and he said, "I'm not supposed to bet, but I'm going to." And I said, "Okay, I'll bet you, I'll bet you that this church will serve, -- (I meant whatever church it was) -- will serve tea and doughnuts when there's evacuation from Fresno." He said, "I'll bet you." He was just so crushed by the whole thing. He said, "They won't." About a month later I got a friendly little note from him saying, "You win." So apparently they did.

And so this went on down further south. I didn't go myself but it went partly by osmosis, partly by letter, and people from one town would go to another town and get it started. And, almost all of the evacuation was carried out in less than the distasteful way it might have been. And this is where we got the expression -- we were trying to do an inhumane thing in a humane way. This is where that expression started.

When the Berkeley people left, along in October, November -- I remember the last person to leave Berkeley, on the last bus, the last person to get on. It was a man, a middle-aged man, a businessman, who carried his crippled mother over his shoulders -- like a baby -- just carried her on to the bus leaving for Tanforan. And that was the last person of Japanese ancestry to leave Berkeley.

### Tanforan

Kingman: Those were the first things I got involved in. Then the next thing was when the evacuees were down at Tanforan and had hardly anything to work with. The Tanforan situation was, to say the least, disgracefully uncomfortable.

Levenson: It was a race track, wasn't it?

Kingman: It was a race track and these people lived in the horses' stalls. And all of the remaining vestiges of the horses' occupancy were not necessarily gone. There would be a family, say of three, or four; father, mother, two small children, maybe a tiny baby. And, of course, one couldn't help but be a little ambivalent about this. You felt so sorry for them. I mean having to live that way when they were American citizens who'd never done anything but go to school -- that sort of thing. I mean while we weren't worried about them we felt sorry for them.





Kingman: On the other hand, this was a job that the Army had been given to do and in American history there had never been anything like this. They were not equipped to handle men and women and babies. On a large basis like this, all in a hurry. They were not accustomed to providing for the needs of women and children.

One of the things that bothered the older women down there more than anything else and also when they got to Topaz, was that, as the Army calls them, latrines had no dividing curtains at all. Now this, for a Japanese woman, was just about as hard as anything she could ever be asked to undergo. So as soon as they could they tried to better this. The Army did try, and even in the face of criticism from people who were reading of the cruel treatment of American civilians who had been placed in prison camps by the Japanese in Singapore and elsewhere. They really tried, but they weren't equipped to do it. So the whole thing was pretty bad.

Well, anyway, they tried to set up schools, of course, immediately for the children. Both to keep them busy and to keep them up with their school work. School work being very important to them all. Of course, they had some accredited Nisei teachers there. They had some good art teachers. I remember Professor Obata was there. From the University of California Art Department.

And I remember, one of the things that they felt so much the need of, in addition to all textbooks, was the sort of thing that kindergarteners and young children use, art materials and papers and what have you. So one of the things that I did was to go to other parents of young children here in Berkeley, and rounded up several huge cartons of mostly used, but not too much used, color equipment and paper and dull scissors, the sort of things that children use. And then because they had an adult art class too, I remember I went to the California School of Arts and Crafts and they sent to Mr. Obata a huge crate of art materials that had been used somewhat but were perfectly useful. And so they were able to start something to keep their minds off of what they were, where they were, and what they were doing, among the adults as well as the children.



University of California Commencement; Harvey Itano,  
Valedictorian, Class of '42

Levenson: I think you talked to me about Commencement ceremonies in 1942.

Kingman: Oh yes. That was a beautiful thing. It certainly gave some intimation of how Robert Gordon Sproul felt about the evacuation. I remember we were all delighted when, at Commencement, in May or June I guess, 1942, he made a statement. Evacuation from Berkeley had taken place very recently and the evacuees had gone from here to Tanforan and were still there.

At the University Commencement, which was held on the football field in the stadium, they had several student speakers as usual. As you know, they always keep the valedictorian to the end, and when it came time for the valedictorian, Dr. Sproul simply stood and said that the valedictorian of the day, whose record had been -- I don't know what it was, it was probably straight A's -- a science major, was Harvey Itano. That was recognizable to anyone who knew anything about Japanese names, Harvey Itano. He said, -- I'm not quoting this precisely, this first part "-- the valedictorian Harvey Itano." But this next is a direct quote.

"I'm sorry he cannot be with us today, He is serving his country elsewhere."

Levenson: Yes.

Kingman: The interesting part of it was not just that he said it but that actually every member of the graduating class and most of the people in the stadium, stood up.

Levenson: It must have been a very moving sight.

Kingman: Oh, it was. I'm very emotional about it every time I think about it because it was a beautiful thing to have happen, right then. And I remember Harvey Itano had been up here at our house for supper, just a few weeks before that. His father was quite ill and had been shipped off to one of the Internment Centers. There were Internment Centers which were entirely different from the Relocation Centers. There were very few of them. They were run by the federal government, the Justice Department. They were occupied by people of all of the Axis countries who were considered either actively engaged in espionage or sabotage or were conspiring or were doing something overtly or covertly against the government.



Kingman: As for evidence it might have been membership in the Shinto temple, it might have been membership in one of the Black Dragon societies, something of that kind. Well, Harvey Itano was with us for supper. He had called us and said he wanted to ask us something. So, of course we asked him for dinner. He was terribly upset. He said, "I don't know what I'm going to do about my father. He's been taken down to -- (I've forgotten which one of the Internment Centers) -- he isn't well and we know that we're going to get him out sooner or later because the charge won't hold." And it didn't, he was let out.

But, we said, "What charge was he taken in on?" That was the first thing we asked, before we could see if we could do anything about it. He said, "All the alien Japanese homes -- anyone under suspicion, and a lot who weren't -- the authorities went in and searched everything, because the order has gone out that the aliens should not have in their possession any firearms or knives or that sort of thing. Lethal weapons." And, I said, "What did your father have?" He said, "A knife we slice our fish with. Nothing but the fishslicing knife which every Japanese family has." They fillet their fish, you know, with it. And he said, "I don't know what we're going to do because my dad isn't well." I don't remember what happened eventually. I do know that he didn't have to stay there long but what became of him later I don't know.

Harvey Itano was one of the students that my husband was able to get a place for at the University in St. Louis, where he graduated with honors and later went back, I think, to Johns Hopkins. I'm not sure where he took his advanced degrees.

Levenson: His M.D.?

Kingman: Yes. And the Ph.D. as well. The sort of thing that he has done has been largely research. Biochemical research in relation to medicine. And he has become one of the authorities in the national health set-up in Baltimore. He is now retiring but is returning to California because he says that this is home and he hasn't been back since the war.

Levenson: I wonder how much of his reasons for not coming to California were connected with the relocation?

Kingman: I don't think any.

Levenson: It was a professional decision, was it?





Kingman: I think those were professional decisions. I think if he hadn't been evacuated, he probably would have gone through the University of California, but instead of that he went through St. Louis.

Levenson: How did you know him? Through the Y?

Kingman: Yes, he was on my husband's YMCA cabinet; the student cabinet. It's a self-governing organization. Harvey was a member of that cabinet.

Levenson: Quite a success story.

Kingman: It is really. It's one of the great ones. I got a letter from him just the other day saying he was coming back. We had hoped he would settle in San Francisco because we thought he was going to do some extra work at the University of California Medical School but I think he's going to settle in southern California instead. But he's still a distinguished alumnus.

#### Student Relocation

Levenson: The experience of Dr. Itano suggests that there must have been many college students whose education was interrupted by the evacuation order. Was there any effort made on their behalf to enable them to continue in school?

Kingman: Yes, there was an excellent program of Student Relocation both on the East Coast and here in Berkeley, where it was organized. Its leadership was in the University YMCA and YWCA, whose executive secretaries were my husband, Harry Kingman, and Leila Anderson of the YWCA.

The Student Relocation program was extensive and successful. It is well described in the tape recordings being made by Harry for this Oral History. Anything I could say about it would be sketchy, while his records are quite full. Yes, there was a lot done for the Nisei college students.

#### Christmas at Topaz: the Messiah again

Kingman: It was shortly after the last Japanese-American left Berkeley that the WRA [War Relocation Authority], which had opened Topaz already, asked me if I would come and do what I could to lighten



Kingman: evacuee discouragement and unhappiness over the Christmas period.

Levenson: Topaz was in Arizona, wasn't it?

Kingman: No, no. It was in Utah. South of Salt Lake City. Out in the desert. And it was cold. It was cold! I said I would go. I didn't have any idea what I was going to do but that I would go. And, as I finally planned it, I figured I would go and stay about three weeks; two weeks before Christmas and one week after. Because I had had some experience in doing that sort of thing, I decided to work with as many people as I could in some sort of a dramatic performance. And so I decided, without anybody asking, I mean without asking anybody about it really, for advice, I decided to try to put on a pageant. It would have to be called a pageant, it couldn't be a play because nobody would have time to learn parts -- of Van Dyke's The Other Wise Man.

Before I went, I decided to work some music into it as I knew that there were some very good musicians in Topaz. And I wanted very much to have, at least, a couple of choruses from the Messiah worked into this. As I had conducted the Messiah in China I knew it very well. I knew I wouldn't have to work at it in my own mind very much so I would have time for other parts of the production.

So I telephoned over to the director of music in the public schools in San Francisco, Charles Dennis, who was my voice teacher when I was in college. I asked him if he knew where I could get say fifty copies of the Messiah. He said, "Yes, I know where you can get them. Go to the Oakland Public Library and they'll let you take them, I'm sure." He said, "I'll call over to them." So he called over to them and sure enough they loaned me fifty copies of the Messiah. That was the first thing I started with.

Then I had to figure on costumes. What I was going to do, what I figured I could do, would be to have someone read the play and as he read the players would move from one tableau to another. So it would be done by a series of tableaux. And that meant costumes. What was I going to do about costumes? I figured on using at least one or two hundred people and with that many costumes, how was I going to get them made? Well, I



Kingman: knew that Japanese women sew beautifully and easily. And although I didn't think they had sewing machines in Topaz, we would do what we could. I went downtown here to Penney's Department Store and to Hink's, and told them what I wanted in the way of stuff to make costumes and they sold me at cost or less, hundreds of yards of material, to take to Topaz.

Levenson: Who paid for this?

Kingman: People around the church paid for it. I asked Mrs. Bellquist and Eleanor Breed to raise the money. In fact, Miss Breed did a lot of the paper work for us because she was the secretary of the church. They scraped up the money and it didn't take a great deal because we used very cheap materials but used a lot of color. And of course we had to have beards -- we had to have a lot of things. But I knew that the Japanese were very clever at making that kind of thing. So I got roll after roll after roll of crepe paper. Of greys and blacks and browns and whites and every color. Well, anyway, to make a long story short, I took this stuff up to Topaz and started in getting people to do things.

I had no trouble until I had to get somebody to be the Other Wise Man. I mean the real lead had to be somebody who had presence and knew what he was doing. Everybody told me I had to get Goro. I said, "Who's Goro?" "Don't you know Goro?" "No, I don't know Goro." Goro Suzuki. Finally I met Goro Suzuki, who was a great, big, tall, handsome, young Nisei who had done quite a lot of night club work, who had been a professional night club singer and therefore had a lot of presence. Everybody liked him. But of course, an amateur thing like this -- I'll never forget -- he didn't want to do it. He didn't want to do it! Because he'd just be walking around like a log you know, from one tableau to another. But he finally said he would. And all during rehearsals, there wasn't one time that he wouldn't come to me "Oh, Mrs. Kingman -- for you I do this!"

Well, an interesting thing about Goro was that he later became the leading man in The Flower Drum Song, on Broadway. When he got out of the Center he was no longer Suzuki, he was Soo. That's his last name now; he uses it when you see him in current television commercials and dramatic television programs.

Levenson: When you say that Goro Suzuki changed his name to Soo, can you tell me why he did that?

Kingman: Yes, it was almost immediately -- I won't say it was after the war, it might have been sooner. As soon as he left Topaz he





Kingman: went to Chicago, and then back to New York. And in order to get any kind of job, certainly in the theatrical profession, he could not use a Japanese name. So he took the first syllable from his own name, Suzuki, and used Soo. He's much taller than most Nisei and his features could be either Chinese or Japanese. So he's never had too much difficulty; that's how he went into Flower Drum Song. As far as I know he's never disassociated himself from his Japanese connections. Just professionally he's done that and then because he did get a good start with the name of Soo he kept it. I see it in the screen credits whenever I see Goro on TV.

Levenson: Did you have any language problems in rehearsals?

Kingman: Oh, the Three Wise Men in the play were three wonderful little non-English speaking gardeners. I hadn't known them before. Some of the people helped me cast them, that's all. But they didn't speak any English and I had to direct them. It was very difficult. I remember well -- they were so willing and so eager. They were Buddhists and, of course, they didn't understand what this particular Christmas story was. But my Three Wise Men had to come in and stand in a row and kneel before the crèche, you see. And the Christ child was there. So, they would come in in a row and then I would tell them to kneel and they didn't understand what I was saying. So I had an interpreter. At one rehearsal, as he interpreted and showed them what to do, one of them began to giggle. And he giggled and giggled and giggled. And he put his hands up in front of his face and he laughed and then he whispered to the other two until they all went off into gales. And, of course, I had to have that explained to me so I asked the interpreter, "What are they saying?", and he laughed too. And he said, "They suggest, respectfully, that they do something else instead of kneel." And, talk about Japanese not having a sense of humor, this was wonderful! I said, "Well that's fine, what do they want to do?" And there they were standing up (this is something very hard to describe without your seeing it) but as they stood, they bowed, very low, rubbing their hands down their legs, over their knees and saying, "ssssssss," and bowing practically to the ground. This was their idea of showing homage. And they knew it was ridiculously funny. Here I saw these Three Wise Men coming in and it was one of the funniest things -- and we were working so hard and yet they knew it was time for a laugh. And we got it. That's one of the things I remember. About the funny little Wise Men.

Well anyway, we went ahead with the pageant and we had altogether, about three hundred people in the cast. I had a chorus of about seventy-five from the high school but I did not



Kingman: conduct it myself, because I found there one of the finest musicians I've ever known in my life, a young boy who was teaching high school music. I remember approaching the little shack where they were having a class and they were playing a record, a very, very fine record of some Christmas carols, and it was as beautiful as anything I'd heard and I said to myself, "Oh, this is beautiful," because it was so cold and sandy and lousy outside: it was terrible. And I stood outside and listened to it until it was finished before I went in. I didn't want to break in on the record. But I went in at the very last and it wasn't a record! So I just went up and told the young teacher who I was and what I wanted. And I said, "Will you conduct these choruses?" He said, "Oh yes." And he trained them. He had them beautifully trained. He did three or four choruses from the Messiah, including of course, the Hallelujah Chorus.

"The Other Wise Man" was presented on two nights. One night the narration was in English and the next in Japanese. One of the clergymen, I guess he was an Issei, had sat up all night the night before and translated it into Japanese. And so they did the whole thing with Japanese narration. The ironic part of it was that there had to be somebody behind the scenes to tell everybody what to do because they couldn't understand Japanese!

Levenson: Did you have any outside visitors or was this purely a camp show?

Kingman: Purely camp. And the place was just jammed. They had a great big assembly room where hundreds could come. And it was jammed full both nights. It was really quite exciting. After the second night, I guess it was Christmas Eve, the youngsters wanted to sing carols. How were they going to sing carols? They had been talking about it the day before and were sure they wanted to sing carols. They were going to go and sing here and sing there, at the administrators' homes and the teachers' homes and for some of the older people. The place was so big and cold, they couldn't move about very well unless they could have an Army truck. Well, I got hold of an Army truck for them, and they all sang. But the day before they had had a meeting and one child said "Let's go out and sing carols for the soldiers." They had guards outside of the barbed wire fence.

Levenson: And the search lights.

Kingman: Yes, and the search lights. And, the young people said -- "Can't go outside, can't go outside. I'm not going to sing for



Kingman: them." Like that. And finally one little kid stood up and said, "Look, those are American soldiers and I'm going out and sing for them." Like that, you know, that was the tone of voice. He got a big hand, big applause and the other boy said, "All right, all right. We'll sing if we can get outside." So I got permission for them to go outside with the truck. Of course, there was an Army man driving the truck and I was assigned to be the chaperone, the legal military escort. Not military, of course, but legal escort. There must have been forty youngsters and we went out and there were a lot of tents of the guards. Only about four or five of the men were out with their guns, guarding, but the rest of them were in their tents. So we went out and started singing and pretty soon you'd see a head stick out and another head stick out and pretty soon the fellows would come out with their blankets around their shoulders.

The carollers called for Goro, "Where is Goro?" I was interested because I had heard the calling out from the soldiers as well. They knew who Goro was apparently. I don't know how they did, but they did. Well, I didn't know he was with us even. But he either was with us or he came out and joined us. One of the two. And they all asked him to sing. And he sang the thing that they all wanted. It was brand new that winter -- and everybody's favorite -- I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas. It was eerie, just an eerie feeling out there in the middle of the desert. There wasn't any snow. It was too cold to snow. But everybody had a grand time. We all sang the carols -- evacuees, chaperones and armed guards all singing Silent Night together. Everybody had a good Christmas out of it. And the soldiers loved it. They wouldn't let the kids go. And there was never a bad feeling, never a truly bad feeling in Topaz. I always hoped it was because they got off to a pretty good start. I don't mean they didn't have tensions. They had troubles of course. Everybody had troubles. But I think it was one of the less difficult Centers.

Levenson: And which of the choruses from the Messiah did you use at Topaz?

Kingman: At Topaz? Let me see. "Surely He Has Borne Our Grievs and Carried Our Sorrows," and "And He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd" and then, of course, the "Hallelujah Chorus." The chorus of high school students who sang that did it as beautifully as I've ever heard it sung, and were as well trained as I've ever heard a student chorus. They would be, I would say, up to the college choruses that travel around





Kingman: for public concerts -- those high school youngsters were just as good. And the young man who trained them was Ed Ino -- they were calling him Eddie Ino.

I later got in touch with the head of Eastman School of Music, Howard Hansen, the American composer who had been one of my teachers earlier, with the idea of getting Eddie a scholarship to the Eastman School on the basis of his remarkable ability. Howard Hansen wrote back and said he would be very glad to do what he could. He thought it could be done without too much trouble and told Eddie to get in touch with him. By that time I had lost track of Eddie, very briefly. He had left Topaz and the next thing I heard he was a Purple Heart in Italy. He never did go back to music.

Levenson: What a shame.

Kingman: It was a shame in a way, but he's kept up his artistic work. He was a sculptor, a potter and about fifteen years ago he turned up with a beautiful signed pot which he gave me for Christmas. And he has also made some extraordinarily beautiful and successful jewelry. So he's kept up with the artistic -- but I wish he'd been a musician. Because he was magic.

Levenson: Was that the time when you were given the plaque?

Kingman: Oh, there was a plaque -- yes. I was given the little plaque in Topaz, after the pageant.

I'll get it because it has the wording on it which is very important, I think. It's right here. One of the things that they had to do at the Centers was to make their living quarters habitable. There were just long barracks, with thin plywood partitions between family areas and just a few square feet to a family. Many of the Nisei tried very hard to make their houses, their little homes, habitable. They built bookcases out of scrap lumber and there was a lot of scrap lumber around because all of the buildings were constructed in the middle of the desert. There were scraps left, and the evacuees would make funny little chairs and funny little stools and funny little this and that. So that when, after the pageant, after the Christmas celebration, they presented me with a plaque which was made, as you see, out of just plain pine. They cut it in the form of a little shield, like a regular plaque would be and put a brief statement behind a little piece of glass which they had put in with nails and the lettering in gold. Incidentally, the lettering, which is quite



Kingman: professional, I think was done by Kim Obata, who later became a very highly successful commercial artist in the Middle West. I think he is now either in Honolulu or has gone to Japan temporarily. I'm not sure.

Levenson: Then he was Professor Obata's son?

Kingman: He was Professor Obata's older son. The younger son became one of the country's outstanding architects.

Levenson: That's Gyo?

Kingman: Yes, that's right. This says "In appreciation to Mrs. Harry Kingman, with deepest gratitude and sincere appreciation, we present this simple acknowledgment for your inspiring and untiring efforts to uplift the morale of this community." And it was signed, "The residents of Topaz City." Topaz, Utah, 1942. That was for Christmas.

Levenson: That's a wonderful thing to have.

Kingman: Well I've had others since then, from the Japanese American Citizens League -- elegant, beautiful things which I love and cherish but this one's the best.

So those are things that I did before the Fair Play Committee asked me if I would take over as their Executive Director. By that time, I had enough of a background on the evacuation so that we could start from where we were rather than having to go back and get a lot of orientation.

Levenson: A unique background I would think.

Kingman: Well, I don't know that anybody else had done quite the same things.



### III THE FAIR PLAY COMMITTEE

#### Origins of the Fair Play Committee

Levenson: One of the main things that I wanted to talk about was the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play. How and why did it come into existence and what was your role in it.

Kingman: For some time before Pearl Harbor there had been a great deal of tension in the state of California, also to some extent in Oregon and Washington. The tension was tightening up for a year or so before Pearl Harbor and a great many adverse comments were being made about persons of Japanese ancestry. We had the Native Sons of the Golden West and we had the California Joint Immigration Committee and we had the Hearst press. We also had the Sacramento and Fresno Bees of the McClatchy chain. They were all worried about what was happening and the pressure was building up to such an extent that there had to be counter pressures.

A group of prominent men decided that they should do something to create this counter pressure. As a matter of fact, the man who originally got the idea was General David Prescott Barrows, a former President of the University of California. At that time he was teaching political science at the University -- at least doing some lecturing. He got in touch with, at first, Galen Fisher, whose name you will hear constantly because Galen Fisher was the heart of the committee's work. He was the heart and conscience of the whole thing. He was an older man, who died shortly after the dissolution of the committee at the end of the war. I think the history of the committee is a monument to his life and work.

Well, General Barrows got in touch with Galen Fisher and they agreed that there should be an independent committee of influential citizens -- and this was the idea -- not to get a large group of people, but yet a group of influential citizens whose voices could not be ignored. So they went to work and got an amazing number of people, people who it is difficult to imagine ever having done anything like it. For instance, they got Governor Olson of the State of California. He was acting chairman of the group.





Levenson: It is remarkable.

Kingman: It is remarkable, that's right. Men of great power in the state, in business, education, religion, labor -- would you like to have me tell you some of them?

Levenson: Yes, I would.

#### Leadership of the Committee

Kingman: Among the group were: Robert Gordon Sproul, President of the University of California; Ray Lyman Wilbur, Chancellor of Stanford University; Alfred J. Lundberg who was the President of the Key System Railways in San Francisco and Oakland and also President of the California State Chamber of Commerce; Monroe E. Deutsch, Vice-President of the University of California; Frederick Coster, who was President of the California Barrel Company and a very outstanding businessman; Aurelia Reinhardt, the President of Mills College; Frank Gaines who was then Mayor of Berkeley; Dean Jackson of the Graduate School of Business at Stanford; Arthur C. McGiffert, President of the Pacific School of Religion; Benjamin Black, Director of Public Health, Alameda County; Karl Morgan Block, the Episcopal Bishop of California; John S. Curren, Vice-President of the Anglo-California National Bank; Ralph T. Fisher, Vice-President of the American Trust Company; Gerald Hagar, former President of the State Bar Association and later, as you know, Regent of the University; George C. Kidwell, Chairman of the State Department of Industrial Relations, and an outstanding AF of L leader from San Francisco; Joseph Thompson, President of Pacific Manufacturing Corporation; former Governor of California, C.C. Young; and then this one you won't believe but it's true, James K. Fisk, Adjutant of the California Department of the American Legion.

Levenson: That is hard to believe.

Kingman: Also the Mayor of San Francisco, and the President of the College of the Pacific, (now University of the Pacific) and the President of the General Steamship Corporation. So it was an outstanding group of people. The first thing they did was to write a letter to fellow citizens just asking them to be alert to the actions of the Japanese government as differentiated from those of our perfectly loyal persons of Japanese ancestry here on the West Coast -- that there was a difference and just to keep it in mind. That was all -- to be very cautious about the one and be very understanding about the other.

Levenson: When was this? In 1941?



Kingman: This was in August of 1941. There was a feeling among some of them, Galen Fisher in particular, who had been a missionary in Japan for many years, that adverse feeling was building up. He felt it sooner than most people did because he was closer to some of the older Japanese here in California, speaking the language very fluently.

Levenson: What denomination was he?

Kingman: I would guess Congregational. Yes, I'm almost positive because the whole family is. He began talking about the tensions back as far as '39 but it didn't come to a head until '41 when there was so much feeling coming up again. Signs were every place "We don't want Japanese here" and even though there had been no Pearl Harbor there was still a lot of feeling, particularly down in the Valley where the Japanese worked farms or the children owned property (because they, the parents, couldn't own property at the time). That's when the group got together and decided that they should have a name. After a bit of experimenting and several preliminary suggestions, they decided to call themselves The Fair Play Committee. At first it wasn't the official name, and probably some of the men on it shuddered at the thought of being considered members of one of the do-gooder groups because it was not a do-gooder type of thing. Even in the beginning, they were opposed to the do-gooder type of thing.

#### Objectives and Policies of the Committee

Kingman: They never opposed the evacuation as such. They deplored it but they took the position that in wartime people without full information just didn't know what ought to happen. Somebody had to decide and it certainly wasn't people like our Committee or any other committee outside of the government. It had to be the government itself. And naturally, it was the War Department and the Justice Department. Now the Justice Department never was enthusiastic about it. The War Department -- at least, the Army part of it -- was strong in its recommendation of total evacuation. The Justice Department turned more and more to an insistence that there be civilian control of any resettlement program.

And this was the position that the Fair Play Committee took. We felt, at first, that evacuation would mean a program involving a relatively few, carefully designated individuals. As time went on, however, it was evident that evacuation was to be indiscriminate -- far-reaching -- total. The Committee's decision was to accept the fact of total evacuation, but to continue to try to interpret what was happening in such a way that an eventual easing of the order would permit the evacuees to return safely to their homes on the Pacific Coast.



Levenson: One of the things that I'm interested in is that it took so long for what Dillon Myer calls the goodwill people,\* goodwill people, he uses the expression again and again, to mobilize. Of course this is understandable because the economic and racist interests were mobilized and all the people like yourself and Sproul and so on had really other things to think about but the Tolan Committee backfired, according to Dillon Myer, in the sense that they could not get a sufficiently strong representation to stop the Army's plan for wholesale evacuation of Japanese-Americans.

Kingman: That's right. One of the major reasons was that most of the good people just didn't believe that it could happen. "It can't happen here."

Levenson: Yes, that's been said so many times.

Kingman: Yes, "It can't happen here." I think the major reason that there was no immediate opposition was that most people simply felt that they didn't have the information. We were at war. None of us were anti war, other than the pacifist members. As a general rule we were not inviting pacifists to join the Committee. We deliberately didn't use pacifists because we didn't want to be accused of being a pacifist group. Not that some of the members didn't have pacifist feelings, but none was aligned with any solely pacifist organization. We were supporters of the war in general and certainly had no intention of doing anything that would make the job more difficult for our government. That was one thing. For a long time there was still no definite statement such as came later from the Navy and later from the FBI, that there had been no sabotage in Honolulu. After Christmas of 1941 was the first time that the documents from Honolulu came in with terrible stories because all of the gossip from Honolulu was reported, none of which was substantiated. And nobody here got drawn in in support of the Japanese-Americans for some time after that because we didn't have any information to contradict the reports that were coming in from Honolulu.

Levenson: What sorts of stories did these reports have?

Kingman: Well, the usual ones about the Japanese in Honolulu, the residents there going out and cutting wide swaths in the sugar cane to show the Japanese fliers where to go and so on. They came with pretty shocking stories and some atrocities, none of which, of course, were substantiated, all of which were subsequently denied by our military and federal investigative authorities.

---

\*See Dillon S. Myer, Uprooted Americans (University of Arizona, Tucson), 1971.

Dillon S. Myer, Autobiography. Typescript in Bancroft Library University of California.

Dillon S. Myer, Interview, in this volume.





Kingman: I think that another thing that made the "do-good" groups, the good people not do anything earlier was the feeling that the proposed evacuation would just be selective. They didn't have any idea that it would be total because it did start out to be selective. Just the older people from certain coastal areas were told to get back a way. And then the people there didn't want them, and they were ordered out again.

#### Public Relations Program Undertaken

Levenson: This brings us to a point that interested me. You said quite frankly that you decided not to use the Fair Play Committee for welfare programs but to influence policy.

Kingman: Right -- that was our whole and continuing policy, and that's why, with our contacts in the government, it worked both ways. We would use information they would give us openly. We would use it in the formation of pamphlets we would get out to different groups, Congressmen, the Press, Service Agencies, Churches and so on and at the same time, we would, in turn, give the government the advantage of the support that we could get for what they were doing in the way they were trying to do it. Because we had confidence that they were trying to do this thing decently. We didn't think it was necessary to go in for welfare. We didn't oppose welfare activities but there were other groups who were doing welfare, who couldn't do what we felt we were peculiarly able to do. Church groups sent great boxes of things to the evacuees, and WRA\* had a welfare program of a kind. The only source of tension within the Committee as it developed over the years, was the feeling on the part of some of the groups which joined in that they should do welfare work among the evacuees. And our insistence, and when I say our I mean the Executive Committee and the group that met regularly and who were empowered by the Constitution which was adopted to make the decisions, was that there not be a welfare program. It was purely and simply a public relations effort.

If we had done welfare work we would have been in the do-gooder class and unable to enlist the type of leadership we wanted. The people we wanted just didn't do that sort of thing. But they were very much interested in creating public opinion.

Levenson: Where did you send your material?

---

\* [War Relocation Authority]



Kingman: Well, I would say, first to all of the press. Even the weeklies in all of California, in much of Oregon and Washington but not the full coverage we hoped for, because we didn't have enough money. We would have liked to send mailings throughout the country but the concentration, not only of Japanese-Americans and Japanese but the concentration of the opposition was in California. The major opposition to Japanese was here. Even though it was very strong in Oregon, it was concentrated here. So we got to all the press. Of course there was no TV, but we got to radio stations. We got it to all the libraries. Registered libraries, librarians. Later on we sent things to every high school, to the principals. To all the Universities, colleges, junior colleges. To many of the labor unions; the major, large city churches, and to all of the church organizational headquarters. The first mailing that went out, always went airmail, the very first one to J. Edgar Hoover, Mr. John McCloy of the War Department and to Mr. Biddle, the Attorney General of the U.S., and to Dillon Myer of the War Relocation Authority. Those were the ones that went first with a cover letter. Every piece of literature that we put out went to them. And with a special copy to the FBI headquarters in San Francisco. I had gone over and met the men there; they knew me. I would call them every once in a while, just to pass the time of day.

Levenson: And they trusted you?

Kingman: Absolutely -- at least as far as I know!

Levenson: That's a remarkable achievement.

Kingman: I think I told you about how we tried to develop lists of people in different communities. Of course, at first we had absolutely nothing to go on. Just nothing to go on and the general feeling was very anti. We just had to go in and dig out the people in a community. And, as I said, we sent out materials, much of which came from the War Department or was prepared from material which was given to us by the government and much that some of our own University people wrote as well as, of course, records of the Japanese-Americans themselves. We would send them to different people in a community, and I told you I think, that we tried to send them to all newspapers, we sent them to clergy and we sent them to teachers. And as I got to thinking about it I have a much fuller memory of some of the groups that we sent them to so I thought that you might like to hear about it.



Kingman: In fact for the typical mailing lists in any given community where there were any friendly members at all, we would write to the friendly ones that we knew already. We had hopes for a member or two of the school department, or the clergy and we would ask them to give us the names and addresses of people who were potential supporters. Just potential, and that didn't mean financial supporters, we meant people who would support the War Department, if and when they wanted to let the Japanese-Americans come back. And those people we asked most particularly to have on our lists, were members of the clergy, the chairmen of all the social agencies and as many of the heads of all those agencies as possible. The YMCA, the YWCA, the public health departments, all the community chest agencies and that takes in quite a large number in a small community. Certainly the superintendents of schools, the chairmen of the chambers of commerce, always the president of the League of Women Voters -- they were very helpful; the heads of the local bar associations; the principals of the high schools; and the names of leading laymen in the community who made up the boards of directors of all these organizations. So that was a pretty good crosscut of the community leadership, if we got all of them.

And in addition to those, of course, we had lists of the entire state legislature and the pertinent committees of the legislature, and of course, the executive of the state, all congressmen, all United States senators, all committee members of the appropriate committees. That was the backbone of the list, I mean the lists that we tried to get.

In addition to those we soon were in touch with many potential supporters among the national magazine publications. Notably, to start with, the natural one would be The Christian Century. Then we went to the Catholic, national Catholic publications, the Jewish publications. Then to the New Republic; some of the labor press, not very many, they weren't favorable enough, but we would try to get the labor publications.

Levenson: I also noted some correspondence with Time?

Kingman: Oh yes, very definitely, Time magazine. And, in fact, one of their writers who was their editor in San Francisco, was very friendly and would place some of the material for us in other magazines that we couldn't reach ourselves. (One still reads his material -- Robert De Roos).

I suspect the Chronicle was the most helpful of all the press on the west coast. The Hollywood Citizen was good. But very, very few others. Although we did get pretty fair treatment





- Kingman: occasionally, depending on what the material was that we were trying to send out. One of the best columnists that we had, of course, was Chester Rowell, of the Chronicle.
- Levenson: I'm sure that local papers were very effective.
- Kingman: There's no question about it. We found that out because we were very fortunate in having a clipping service. We never could have afforded one, but it just happened that Galen Fisher had a good friend -- he had so many good friends -- Mr. Philip McCombs, who lives here in Berkeley. He's still very active in church circles, club circles, what have you -- Mr. McCombs happened to be the head of the major clipping service in northern California and Galen asked him for some assistance. I think, as a matter of fact, at the beginning Galen probably asked him for some money -- this would be my guess, although I don't know -- my guess would be that he asked him for some money, and Mr. McCombs made a far greater contribution. He said, "Would it help you if I would give a clipping service to the Committee for as long as they want it?" Of course, we said, "Let us have the clipping service." So we had a clipping service which covered all of California. A few other papers, but mostly all of California, including the weeklies, the little country papers, the big city press -- on a daily basis -- we got these things in every day. Clipped, noted. We never could have had it otherwise and it gave us a much better feeling of what was happening in the State than we could have ever had under any other circumstance.
- Levenson: And these clippings are all in the Bancroft Library?
- Kingman: They're all there as far as I know. They were kept together by the Committee's fine office secretary, Mary Jefferds, whose competence and dedication made it possible for me to do all my travelling throughout the state and to Washington, D.C. Some of them may have been lost but I think a great many of them are there. Enough, certainly to indicate the spread of the coverage and the type of story that was being written at the time. It was a very great thing to have that clipping service.
- Levenson: You said that your relationships with the appropriate Federal agencies and departments was good?
- Kingman: Yes, we were able to work with the federal set-up. I don't think I could have done it, I couldn't have borne the pressure and the disapproval if I hadn't known down deep that I had the approval of the people who were responsible for letting me do it.



Levenson: How did this disapproval manifest itself?

Kingman: Oh, we got a few crank letters but not very bad ones. We were pretty well vilified in some of the press and sometimes we'd get pretty stiff letters from organizations or people who didn't like what we were doing. We sent material to everybody we could think of who could be reached. There were lots of anti-Japanese organizations in the state. Little communities down in the valley, for instance (I can't remember the names of any of them now), would have their own little "Ban the Jap" group. There was a "Ban the Jap" organization and they had chapters all over the state, and their broadsides would come in.

But one also sensed among one's own friends a certain degree of hostility -- not one's close friends but acquaintances. I don't think I could have stood the pressure if I hadn't had the same feelings that most Americans did. We had a war to win. There was no feeling like there is now in the Vietnam thing. I mean there was complete, complete support for the war. I say complete, I mean all but the bona fide pacifists. But, I couldn't have done it if I hadn't felt that I was really helping. I could show you references in this book by Shidler.\* He said something to the effect that one of the points that the Fair Play Committee made right straight through was that they were helping the war effort. This is the feeling that we had. This was our contribution to the war effort. Because, after all, in our own way, we were fighting for Democracy, for American principles. And this was what the war was about. And the way we worked, we just felt would maintain the high American principles that we weren't going to lose sight of and become racist.

I think the feeling of the whole committee was that we were making a contribution to the war effort. We were not bucking it at any time. I remember, during the war, I was asked to go on the board of the Northern California Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. Though they had taken a very strong position against evacuation, I wouldn't do it. And they recognized this, and elected me to the board anyway. In fact, Roger Baldwin, who was the National Director of ACLU at that time, said he thought The Fair Play Committee was right to take this position in order to do the job we were doing.

---

\*See Atlee E. Shidler, "The Fair Play Committee: A Study in the Protection of the Rights of Minority Groups." M.A. Thesis, Claremont Graduate Schools, 1952. M.S.



The Committee and Governor Warren

Levenson: Was the Fair Play Committee at any time in touch with Governor Earl Warren?

Kingman: As I told you, we included state officials on our mailing list. I remember that we made particularly sure that copies of everything went to the Governor's office. He was most outspoken in his support of the position of General De Witt, whose command brought about total evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast. This, of course, was exactly opposite to our point of view, which did not accept the necessity of a general evacuation without regard to American citizenship or to individual rights under the law.

One of our Board members, Mr. Alfred J. Lundberg of Oakland, a long time friend of the Governor, was particularly disturbed by the disagreement and wrote a letter to Mr. Warren on July 13, 1943, spelling out his concern -- which was ours -- and asking for a specific statement of the governor's position. He received a full reply in a very friendly letter from Governor Warren, dated July 16, 1943, a letter which Mr. Lundberg, in turn, replied to on September 2, 1943. Copies of these letters are in the files of the Fair Play Committee which have been given to The Bancroft Library.

Many members of our Executive Committee were close friends of Governor Warren. As Governor of the State of California he was a member of the Board of Regents of the University when Robert Gordon Sproul was its president and Chester Rowell a fellow Regent. His personal friendship with many of our members went back for decades, some from boyhood. So it went. And while these men and our other members as well disagreed with the Governor on his position, they continued to have deep respect and affection for the man who later was to contribute so much to the vitality and high purpose of the Supreme Court of the United States.

As far as I know, Earl Warren has never regretted the position he took during the war, and as far as I know, none of us has found reason to regret ours.





The Committee and the Federal Government

Levenson: Would you expand a little on your relations with the Federal Government?

Kingman: As it proceeded with its program, the Fair Play Committee, I think, could be said to have dug in its heels; first of all, in relation to its attitude towards government departments, such as the War Department, Justice Department, later the Interior Department -- and also in relation to the California public. As for the evacuees, we took an 'If and When' position. We did not want loyal persons of Japanese ancestry of whatever generation permanently excluded, because that would have been solely on account of race.

Levenson: When you say permanently, do you mean after the war was over?

Kingman: Yes. We intended that 'If and When' the War Department said they could return, there should have been created or maintained an atmosphere on the Pacific Coast, a social, political and economic atmosphere, which would make it possible for them to return. 'If and When' -- this expression -- I still say it in my sleep -- 'If and When'. In other words we never said that they should come back "right now." It was none of our business. But it was our business to keep the fact that they had been sent away from becoming a permanent attitude or a permanent situation. Which was, of course, what many of the groups such as the Native Sons, the Joint Immigration Committee and certainly most of the agriculturalists wanted. Some of them were not too bad, but most of them were pretty negative about it and they were determined that they would never let the Japanese come back.

Some of the choicest lands, of course, were owned by Nisei. And why not? I mean, they bought it. The Caucasian landowners were determined that they weren't coming back and we were just as determined, not only that we had a responsibility as concerned citizens but that also the War Department and the Justice Department, having called for this evacuation, having enforced it, had a like responsibility. This was the big thing that we were trying to do. And this is why we were able to help the War Department which soon saw they shouldn't have ordered the evacuation in the first place.



Levenson: Do you mean the War Department or the WRA?

Kingman: I mean War Department. You'll find a great deal of correspondence between me and John McCloy, who was Assistant Secretary of War in charge of this whole thing. I went back and talked with him several times and had a lot of correspondence with him. I remember very well the first time we talked and his attitude was great -- his personal attitude. He was one of Alexander Meiklejohn's "boys" from St. John's College and he had a fine background upon which to base conclusions. Of course he wasn't doing it alone. But I mean that his was a voice and a not inconsiderable voice.

I remember the first time I talked to him, and incidentally most of the appointments that I would get with him would be made through Dillon Myer, because Dillon wanted to do certain things, you see, and he probably said, now there are people in California, there are strong groups in California working on this. Now for instance, Ruth Kingman's here or she can come here and she'll tell you about it. So I'd get an appointment with McCloy.

I remember one time I went back to Washington and was talking to Attorney-General Biddle, Francis Biddle, who had opposed the evacuation from the beginning. He was overruled but didn't like any part of it. At that particular point we needed a strong statement indicating that these people did have rights, they did have rights as citizens, as law-abiding people whether they were citizens or not. And that 'If and When' -- they should be allowed back. And he said, "Well, Mrs. Kingman, is there anything I can do?" I said, "Yes. Make a statement and give it to us and let us distribute it." And he said in a few days he was going to make a speech at the University of Virginia, and for me to watch for it.

So we watched for it and when I got a copy of it before he gave it, I saw that it was just down the line what I had asked for. Absolutely. And with a covering note saying, "I hope this is what you wanted." That's not verbatim what he said but it's the idea. So this is the way we worked. Now if we had been the kind of organization, a fine kind which did volunteer welfare work, we couldn't have gotten that kind of cooperation because the people we needed wouldn't be interested in giving it to us.

Incidentally, I'll never forget one time when I had an appointment with John McCloy. We were talking about the possibility of resuming the draft for the Nisei. It had been cut



Kingman: off and contrary to the way young people feel now, they wanted to be drafted -- practically all of them. A few didn't, of course. Granted, there were always a few dissidents and perhaps a few potentially disloyal persons. (As I've pointed out before, there was never one act of either espionage or sabotage on the West Coast other than through the Japanese consulate).

Levenson: This is one of the few things that I feel really can't be repeated enough times.

Kingman: That's right. That's right. Well, we sent out enough stuff after we got it. But it was very hard to get during the first two years. We used only documented material and it was difficult to obtain.

But anyway, Mr. McCloy said that he had decided that they would renew the draft. He was worried and asked me, "Do you really feel that this is safe to do?" He was eager for reassurance from someone from the Pacific Coast. This was very obvious, and of course I reassured him. Also, I urged, successfully, that the Women's Army Corps be opened up to Nisei girls. Not very many of them went in; as a matter of fact, very few, because of family influence. They didn't like their girls to go into the army, not because it was the American army but because girls just didn't do that sort of thing. That was all -- it was unfeminine, it was not right. So it was very difficult to get the Nisei girls in. A few joined, but not very many became WACs.

Levenson: Were they in a special unit?

Kingman: No, not at all. The only reason that the boys wanted to be in a special unit was that they wanted to do some real, honest-to-God fighting to prove their loyalty. And, of course you know the record of their particular unit!

Levenson: The 442nd?

Kingman: Yes. The 442nd of which the 100th from Honolulu was a part. They had more Purple Hearts than any military group in the history of the United States.

Levenson: What do you think that McCloy was so anxious about?

Kingman: Well, I think McCloy was anxious because he was concerned about two things. First of all, did I know enough about the Nisei to be able to really, seriously, down deep in my heart, trust





Kingman: them? That was one thing. And the other thing, did I think that public opinion in California would explode if the War Department would start taking them in the Army again? I tried to reassure him on both counts. Because I always took the position, and I think I was right, that no matter how much Californians hated the Japanese, and they did hate the Japanese, they would never abuse a man in uniform. It was very clear in the things that came out later, that the American Legion, which was one of the strongest groups urging that the Japanese never be allowed to come back, nevertheless came out unequivocally in support of any man in uniform. Regardless.

Levenson: Well, how do you square that with what happened up at Hood River and various places where the Legion tried to remove names from War Memorials?

Kingman: They were not Japanese names from World War II. They were from World War I. And, of course that's Oregon. It's not California and actually some of the most vicious things happened in Oregon. To put in a little humor -- which is rather sordid humor -- I remember when we dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, one of the men who was working, not with our committee but with another one, was shaking his head and saying, "Why did they go to Hiroshima, there's always Portland?" I mean he was pretty desperate about some of the things that were going on at that time. And he wouldn't be serious about it but Portland, I mean Oregon was really -- it had some fine people; Mrs. Farquharson, a very fine person, was a State Senator -- and she gave fine leadership, was very outspoken and it didn't ever seem to hurt her politically, Washington wasn't as bad as California and certainly not as bad as Oregon.

#### Visit to Camp Shelby

Levenson: Can we talk about the 442nd and your visit to Camp Shelby?

Kingman: Well, I'm sure you have in your materials the dates and whatnot, when the War Department decided to use the Nisei in the regular Army and when they later on took them in as regular draftees, and how the group themselves urged the War Department to let them work as a segregated unit, not for the sake of segregation but for the sake of showing that they really wanted to do a concerted job, to prove their loyalty.

Levenson: I'm not sure that I have that documentation. That the Nisei themselves wanted to be segregated.



Kingman: Oh yes. I'm sure that Dillon Myer's book, when it's published will have that.\* But its well known, this ~~is~~ something they wanted. I know that John McCloy was very hesitant about it because, in the first place, he didn't approve of segregation. But when the Nisei wanted it as badly as they did he consented. That doesn't mean that there weren't Japanese-Americans fighting elsewhere, because there were. There were scores of them in the South Pacific. Some of the most fascinating stories that I've heard came from General (Joseph) Stilwell who had charge of that operation.

I remember at a dinner after the war, over in San Francisco, for the men in the 442nd and for General Stilwell. There were many Nisei there who had not been in the Army, many Issei and a large number of government people. It just happened that the Japanese American Citizens League which helped sponsor the dinner asked me to be Chairman -- I mean Toastmistress rather -- so I happened to be fortunate enough to be sitting next to General Stilwell. Some of the stories he told me then were great. I can't remember with enough accuracy to put them to you now but I do remember his saying, as he looked around and pointed to this one and that one and then another one of the men who were still in uniform, "Now that boy was on such and such an island, I remember what he did."

He told me that one of the things that the Nisei in the South Pacific did would be -- they were all with an intelligence group -- to try to get the Japanese soldiers from Japan, who had taken over the island, out of the caves so they wouldn't ambush our men. And the only way it could be done was for these Nisei to take their walky-talkies down into the caves and call the Japanese out. Of course, our men were sitting ducks as they entered the caves and many of them were wounded. Then when they'd come out and go back to camp, each man had to be assigned a Causasian buddy so that he would be safe from other American soldiers, who couldn't distinguish our Nisei from the enemy who looked the same.

Levenson: Why were the Nisei sent to training camp in Mississippi?

Kingman: I do not know. That's one of the things that people who were watching this whole process with some concern were worried about. And objected to. But, at that time, I don't think anybody

---

\*Dillon S. Myer, op. cit., pp. 144-157



Kingman: knew where the 442nd was going to go and we always figured that maybe, this is just maybe, it was because they were going into tropical country. And Mississippi is pretty tropical. But, Camp Shelby put the men in a very peculiar position because that, of course, is in the deep South. Out here on the West Coast of course, they were subject to discrimination -- they had been accustomed all their lives, more or less, to social discrimination, as well as economic, but social discrimination -- well, they went down there and found that they were white, they were considered white and in all of the segregated facilities they had to go to the white side of the building and the white drinking fountains and the white seats in the theater. And they didn't like it. Not because they didn't want to be white but they really didn't want to discriminate. They weren't very happy about that. I remember one time I went back to see John McCloy about something -- right this minute I don't know precisely what it was, it was probably trying to get, it might have been trying to get the Nisei girls into the WAC which subsequently was done -- but during the process of talking to him I expressed some interest in Camp Shelby and he said, "How would you like to go down there?" I said, "I'd love to." Because there were a lot of the men from Berkeley there whom I had met during the period of evacuation. Most had gone to Tópaz, some had gone to Manzanar -- or had gone to school some place in the Middle West and had volunteered from there, I was eager to see them again, so I said, "I'd love to go." So I routed my ticket home that way, through the South, via the Southern Pacific -- remember the good old days when we had trains?

When I got to Camp Shelby I realized that I was getting the VIP treatment, I've never had such a day in my life. There was a command car waiting for me at the train and I went right straight to headquarters. The first thing that the Colonel wanted to know was if there was anybody in particular I wanted to see. I was aghast, gulped, and couldn't remember anybody's name but about that time a young Captain came in -- a doctor -- I recognized him -- he didn't know me personally but I recognized him from having seen him in Berkeley so I spoke to him and he said he knew where some of the Berkeley men were. He directed the man who was driving the command car that we were running around in, and they took me way out where the men were on exercises. They were having blackboard talks, they were shooting, they were doing all sorts of things. When they quit for a while some of the men from Berkeley came over and talked to me.

Later on we drove down through the forest, you know, with droopy moss like you think of seeing in Mississippi. By that





Kingman: time, the Colonel was with me, we were going over to "chow" with some of the enlisted men. As we were driving along I saw a GI trudging along with his back to us. "That looks like a Nisei!" (There were lots of men in Shelby who were not part of the 442nd unit). When I said, "That looks like a Nisei," he said, "It is. Do you want to slow down?" I said, "Sure, slow down." I didn't know who it was, but then I saw it was a young pharmacist from Berkeley whom I had known and worked with during the evacuation. He'd been very, very helpful in getting some of the vaccinations done. So the car stopped, and of course the poor GI was scared to death. He didn't see me at first and there was the Colonel and he was wondering what he was doing wrong, I'm sure. He stood there shaking all over and saluting and of course the Colonel put him at ease immediately. We talked for about five minutes and then went on. They took me to one of the camp kitchens, not the regular eating place but to a camp kitchen "in the field" where some men were eating whom I might have known. I did know two or three of them -- not very many -- I had a combination of American and Japanese food, an excellent meal. They had no potatoes. They had rice, I remember, and a great amount of Japanese shoyu, the kind of soy sauce they use.

It was a great day and the Army, the War Department, couldn't have been more courteous to me. They wanted me to see how things were going down there and when they took me back to headquarters they brought in Mike Masaoka who was, at that time, public relations officer for the 442nd. They left us together for about half an hour, and we talked about the experiences of the 442nd. He was very optimistic, and very friendly as far as the War Department was concerned. He thought the Nisei were getting a square deal.

Finally I went back to my train and west to California. It had been an experience that was quite unique. I don't know of any other civilian who got into one of those camps who wasn't related to somebody there. I enjoyed it very much and the War Department people were most courteous and very helpful.

Levenson: What was your impression of morale?

Kingman: Very good. Excellent, tops, just tops. No problem. Lots of horseplay around at lunch time. Seemed just like it would be back here at the University.

Levenson: What a wonderful comment on the Army!



Kingman: Well, this bunch of boys had a morale that couldn't be bettered. They were doing what they wanted to be doing. They were, many of them, doing it against their families' wishes. Their families couldn't understand how they could volunteer after being treated as second class citizens. They didn't have any particular feeling that they didn't want their sons to fight Japan but they didn't see how the boys could do this, going from a relocation camp to which they had been sent by the Army. It was just more than the parents could understand. But there seemed to be a complete unanimity of spirit as far as I could see. I didn't see any grouchy faces. Or if I did, maybe I've forgotten them now.



#### IV THE WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY AND THE COMMUNITY

##### WRA Public Relations

- Levenson: We were talking about the Fair Play Committee's public relations work. I would like to know more about the WRA's public relations efforts. I know they did their best, but they had problems and weaknesses.
- Kingman: They certainly did! They improved toward the end but their first material was written, was formulated -- all their plans for public relations were formulated and material for speeches that were made, were worked out by people who had not lived on the Pacific coast. And the sort of thing that would be applicable throughout the rest of the country was completely inadequate for the Pacific coast because the writers were woefully ignorant about Japanese-Americans. Sometimes they made terrible mistakes -- notably, after some of the difficulties at Tule Lake. Some of their public relations were appalling.
- Levenson: In what respect?
- Kingman: Oh, they'd wait two or three or four days before they'd make any explanation about what was going on and of course that's the last thing you want to do in public relations. You've got to -- if something's gone wrong you've got to explain it immediately. And while they were perfectly willing, they just weren't set up to do this sort of thing and they didn't do it. But they later got on to it -- they sent a special person to the San Francisco office.
- Levenson: Did you suggest that?
- Kingman: Probably. I know that we were constantly asking for more material and more factual stuff that we could base our own material on, because we were trying so hard to make people see





Kingman: out here that people from this group of Japanese-Americans which had been relocated either were still in the Centers or were living perfectly normal lives elsewhere in communities that had accepted them completely. With little question. The students had some trouble but not very much. We had letters, any number of letters, from students who were going to universities elsewhere, saying they had many friends, everything was fine. Some of the adults who relocated had more difficulty, particularly if they didn't have a good command of the English language.

But such difficulties weren't general, because relocating was done carefully. The WRA was very careful not to send any family into a community where there wasn't an expressed degree of acceptance on the part of the city government and possible neighbors and a job. The community knew that they weren't put in to take anybody's job or anything of the kind. Of course there were lots of jobs available at that time. And there was one whole hassle with WRA which we didn't push strongly but during which we urged that many of the people in the Centers be allowed to go out, not indiscriminately, but go out generally with government support, to do farm work. Because we needed food production. I certainly knew it because shortly after the evacuees left Berkeley, I went up, spent a weekend on a big farm near Woodland, picking tomatoes, to help keep the tomato crop from rotting. It was the first stoop labor I ever did. And the last, I hope!

I remember that I felt very strongly that they should be used, these people -- that their skills should be used. But it was not done generally.

The evacuees were relocated with great, great care which of course should have been done although we felt it should have been done more speedily sometimes. But WRA public relations, as I said, on the West Coast, was pretty inadequate. I would say that as far as the rest of the country was concerned it was good. But of course, there were whole areas where they'd never seen a person of Japanese ancestry and they didn't know anything about what had happened on the West Coast. They knew Pearl Harbor but they didn't really associate it with Japanese-Americans, so there was relatively little difficulty in relocating them in parts of the country. Of course there was some difficulty. But by and large, there wasn't too much. And there was always the argument that there had not been any suggestion that they be evacuated from Hawaii. Nobody even suggested it seriously.

Levenson: Why not?



Kingman: Because there has always been less prejudice there and there was not a large group of persons who were particularly anxious to take over landholdings or other properties. And of course the Japanese were a large part -- maybe not a majority -- but a large part of the Hawaiian population at that time.

Levenson: I think about 40%.

Kingman: Was it? Something close to parity in population. And everybody knew them. When anybody knew the Japanese, enough to know them as persons, they quickly saw as anybody does with any minority, that you're talking about individuals, you're not talking about people as a group, you're talking about persons. In Honolulu and Hawaii, everybody had friends who were persons. Whereas here it was not true. It was too small a minority. They were just people.

Levenson: And too ghettoized.

Kingman: That's right. Too ghettoized. And this was one of the things that happened about the relocation. It jolted that out, that pattern. And while they came back and are living pretty much together, it's not necessarily so and I think certainly less ghettoized. Of course they're better off economically because there's less prejudice against them. They can get employment. But public relations was a very important thing and it was not well done on the West Coast, as far as WRA was concerned. The Army did a pretty good job.

Yes. They tried, they really tried, within the scope of their experience. Of course, they'd never had an experience like this. They certainly utilized every facet of possibility in the combat unit. They publicized it. They used pictures. They did everything they possibly could. And, after all, that's what they had to work with. And what they had to work with, they did magnificently, I thought. And that was thanks largely to Mr. McCloy, who had the civilian approach to it all.

Levenson: Well of course, WRA was a civilian agency.

Kingman: Yes. Oh yes.

Levenson: And had a sufficient budget for an adequate public relations program.

Kingman: Of course WRA was under a tremendous disadvantage in as much as whenever they would come out with a good piece of public relations, whether it be a speech by someone on an article or



Kingman: something of the kind, or a little pamphlet, aimed at the country as a whole, immediately they would be jumped on by the California congressional delegation. There were two or three who were not so inclined, but most of them would go along. And that went also for Washington and Oregon. And WRA would be pounced upon, and Dillon Myer would be called up before a congressional committee to answer "Why was WRA spending all this money on these Japs? Or why, what are you trying to do -- treat these people as if they were all right?" So they were under a tremendous handicap. But WRA finally realized a good program could be carried out by having somebody out here on the Coast to catch the flak, and sometimes to provide much more of the candid information that was wanted. So it was live and learn.

Pressures on President Sproul as Honorary Chairman of the Fair Play Committee

Levenson: What were your Committee's relations with President Sproul?

Kingman: He was Honorary Chairman. We were delighted that he was, of course, because he was a man of great prestige and honor in the state. And it must have been -- I'm sure it was -- a very courageous position for him to take. As you know, a great deal of the money for the University comes through the legislature, but it is raised through taxes, much of it from agriculture. There's traditionally a strong relationship between the Agricultural Extension division of the University and agriculture in California.

So it took, I think, a very high degree of courage for President Sproul to take the Honorary Chairmanship of the Fair Play Committee. Particularly when, as far as I know, he had never associated himself before, in any way, with any group that was taking such a controversial position.

He didn't come to our meetings. We knew he wouldn't. Because he couldn't, he was too busy. But we always kept him informed when we could, and if we couldn't it was for one of two reasons: either he was out of town, or, we would find ourselves in the same position with many other people who were trying to see the President of the University.

Levenson: This has been said in our tapes as well as in many other places. Inaccessible.





Kingman: Inaccessible. Absolutely inaccessible. Through no fault of his, I've always felt sure. Because when we would meet with him, he was more, more than gracious; more than eager to do whatever he could. And, one of the things that we wanted him to do very much, all along, was to make some sort of strong statement that we could use. And he did make statements from time to time. I remember though, that the pressures on him were fantastic! Either to get out of the Committee or to make the Committee take a different position.

One of the things that bothered so many people in California, in the anti-Japanese groups was a continuing mistrust of WRA. When I say 'anti-Japanese', remember I'm not talking about Japanese Japanese; I'm talking about Americans of Japanese ancestry, whether they be first or second or third generation. Our Committee wasn't interested in anybody except the loyal persons of Japanese ancestry. So when I speak of the 'anti-Japanese', I'm talking about the anti loyal persons of Japanese ancestry.

Most of the people in California who were anti-Japanese were also anti, strongly anti War Relocation Authority. They made much of the fact that the War Relocation Authority treated these people as people, not as prisoners. Even though they did have to be behind barbed wire. And they resented the fact that the evacuees had schools, though they weren't necessarily very good. They had hospitals; they had recreation; they had adequate food. In other words, they had, probably, better care than some of them had had before the war. By and large, the centers were self-sufficient.

Well, most of the people who were anti WRA, War Relocation Authority, were also anti Fair Play Committee and anti anybody who was doing anything for the Japanese-Americans. And so, when Bob Sproul, pardon me, I should say, President Sproul, would come out with a statement, or our Committee would come out with a statement with our letterhead, Hon. Chairman Robert Gordon Sproul, it would infuriate many people. They would either write to him personally, or they would get on the telephone to their assemblyman or their state senator, or, if they were mad enough, they'd get on the line to their congressman. And then the congressman, or whoever, in turn, would get in touch with Robert Sproul.

Well the pressures on him were pretty rough probably. I say probably because I'm sure they didn't get to him very much more successfully than a lot of the rest of us did. But anyway, I remember one time, and I don't know -- I could probably find



Kingman: it in the files, which congressman it was -- some place in southern California -- took exception to something that had happened in the relocation centers and blasted Dillon Myer, the Director of the War Relocation Authority.

Well, as you know, one of the things that we tried to do was to provide a kind of a coast-wide public relations program, local, state-wide, coast-wide -- over and above what the War Relocation Authority was able to do. And speaking as sort of home folks. And we came out strongly in defense of the War Relocation Authority and of Dillon Myer.

In one particular instance -- I don't remember precisely what it was now -- it might very well have been after one of the riots at Tule Lake, because they did have some serious trouble up there, where the more recalcitrant people were sent. In any event, I think it was after one of those infrequent riots that we came out strongly in support of the policy that the War Relocation Authority was following -- and this congressman had apparently been telephoned by many of his constituents in southern California who didn't like it. They were insulted, they didn't like it. So they called him and he, in turn, must have said, "I know Robert Sproul. I'm going to talk to him and see about this."

So he wrote to him and asked, "Now what's this your Committee's saying about the disloyal Japs up there in Tule Lake? And they're sticking up for them!" Well it just happened that Mr. Sproul was away from Berkeley at the time, had not received the information we had sent him, including the statement we had made and the explanation of why we were making it and how we felt it was necessary to support WRA. And he did something that I suppose was perfectly natural in a case like that. He said, "I don't know anything about it. I don't know anything about what the Committee did on that. I can't answer it. I don't know." And, of course, that's what came out in the paper the next day. In the Los Angeles Times, I think it was, saying that Dr. Sproul had dissociated himself from the activities of the Committee. Not all -- but one of the actions of the Committee.

Of course, this put us in a very bad light. So when he got back to Berkeley the next day or two, I went to his office and was able to break down the wall and to get in, after waiting for a long, long while, I asked him about his statement. He said that he had said it because he didn't have the information. And I said, "But it was on your desk." And he said, that it hadn't been given to him. And I said, "Well something must be done so that you can get our material." And he said, "It was



difficult." I said, "I know it's difficult. Everything we're doing is difficult. We're working under tremendously difficult circumstances in a very difficult period."

Levenson: I think he wrote a letter to your Committee, protesting about the incident.

Kingman: I don't remember.

Levenson: It's in the file.

Kingman: All I remember is the situation. I don't remember the letter. But I do remember that it came out in the paper, that he dissociated himself from the position we had taken. At any rate I asked him if he felt it was necessary to do something different to get material to him. And he was a little noncommittal about it so I suggested to him that if it was going to continue to be difficult this way, perhaps we had better make a different arrangement -- that I was quite sure that the President of Stanford University, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, who was on our Board, would be perfectly happy to take the position of Honorary Chairman.

Dr. Sproul was a little surprised. And then he got to thinking about it and said, "Well, I think we can make arrangements." And he said, "I think that from now on you'll find that you can reach me in person within a very reasonable number of hours, wherever I am, to give me personal information." I said, "That sounds wonderful. We don't want to embarrass you but we can't have the Committee embarrassed either." And he said, "Yes, I understand that." We shook hands and I walked off.

And apparently the lines were eased up because he immediately began getting everything. I know he did.

Levenson: How did you know?

Kingman: Because we'd sometimes get a phone call or one of the board members would be talking to him at another meeting (we had some regents on our board, you know). And they'd be talking to him, and he knew what we were doing. It was the first time, I think, that he really knew what we were doing. And about two weeks later, I don't know how long, Dillon Myer was out here and wanted very much to talk with President Sproul who happened to be in New York at the time. Because of what he had said, I was able, through his office here, to get past the difficulties and find out where he was. I called him in New York and he left a board meeting to talk to Dillon Myer out here.

Levenson: That's wonderful.





Kingman: Yes, we had a wonderful relationship from then on. There was no difficulty. Actually, it was not Bob Sproul, it was the difficulty in getting to him.

Levenson: What do you think really changed his mind on it?

Kingman: Changed his mind, what do you mean?

Levenson: Well, he could have removed that difficulty at any point.

Kingman: Well, this is something nobody knows. This is one of those things that nobody knows, that's all.



## V CHANGING TIDE OF PUBLIC OPINION

### Sergeant Ben Kuroki Speaks to the Commonwealth Club

Levenson: Do you want to talk about Ben Kuroki?

Kingman: Yes. Along about the latter part of 1943, we began to have a feeling that we were about to experience a change in attitude on the West Coast; that it was possible that the opposition to the return of the loyal persons of Japanese ancestry was decreasing; that there was a chance that there could be a change. So I went to Dr. Monroe Deutsch who was the Provost of the University of California at that time. He was also the President of the San Francisco Commonwealth Club which, as you know, is a very influential group of business and professional men in San Francisco and and northern California. I asked Dr. Deutsch if he didn't think that maybe it was about time that someone of Japanese ancestry, a loyal Japanese-American, probably someone in uniform, could be invited to speak to the Commonwealth Club. Of course that sounded a little unusual because nothing like that had happened before. But he said that he thought that the atmosphere had cleared enough so that we could do that, maybe, if we had the right person. Well, I had heard that Sergeant Ben Kuroki, of the United States Air Force had returned to Washington or thereabouts -- I didn't know exactly where he was -- following thirty some odd missions in Europe.

He was a tailgunner in a bomber, and he had been in the Ploesti oil field airraids. He had come back and instead of accepting what he could have had which was no more active missions -- he asked for more assignments. He also asked that they be in the Pacific area because he still felt that he had something more to do, that his service in the European theater wasn't enough. He wanted to work in the South Pacific with the American Air Force against Japan.

Well, I knew about this. I didn't know anything about him otherwise. I didn't know who he was, what he was, what he was like, what his background was. I didn't know anything about



Kingman: him other than his war service, which was good enough for me.

So I suggested to Dr. Deutsch that he be invited to speak at the Commonwealth Club although he was just a Sergeant in the Air Force. Well, Monroe Deutsch had a great deal of imagination, as well as a keen appreciation of public relations. As a member of the Fair Play Committee he felt very strongly, as I did, that now was the time we just might be able to do something to kick off a change in feeling. So he said, "Well, how can we get this Ben Kuroki?" I said, "I don't know but I'll try to find out." So I got in touch with John McCloy's office and told him that we wanted very much to have Ben Kuroki. Now Ben Kuroki was not in California. He wasn't any place around. How could we get him? I don't know how they did it, but some way the War Department managed to get Ben Kuroki stationed down in southern California in a Rest and Recreation Center, which was the natural follow-up to his thirty some odd forays in Europe.

Once in California he could be assigned to any job that the War Department wanted him to do on the West Coast. So he was assigned the job of speaking to the Commonwealth Club at San Francisco. And he came, together with, I think it was a young captain, I'm not sure, a Caucasian captain from the Rest and Recreation area who was assigned to the War Department Information Service there. He was supposed to help Ben Kuroki write the speech that he was to give.

Well, I talked to this young captain later, and he said that he suggested to Ben that he write what he wanted to write and then submit it to him for additions or deletions or changes or whatever. And so Ben stayed up all night practically, a couple of nights, and wrote a speech and then gave it to the Information Officer.\*

Ben Kuroki had been through high school. As far as I know he had gone no further, but had been helping his family. The speech that he wrote was delivered with no changes. I got reports on the speech from two people. One was from the young captain of Information Services who accompanied Ben Kuroki, and the other was from my husband who is a life member of the Commonwealth Club.

It seems that when Ben turned up at the Commonwealth Club, he didn't look like anything you'd pick out to represent the Nisei. In appearance he was a little, thin, wiry, buck-toothed Jap. He didn't look like anything you would present as being the 'less undesirable' of the Japanese-Americans. He

---

\*See Appendix II





Kingman: was little; he was certainly not commanding as he stood up before this crowd of Commonwealth Club members. They assembled at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco; a standing-room only crowd because he was one of the very first Japanese-Americans in uniform, or any other way of course, to appear in San Francisco since evacuation. He stood up when he was introduced and the Information Officer who talked to me later, reported, "I sat there and the perspiration ran off of me. I didn't know what they were going to do. I had no idea of what their reception was going to be to this guy." But they applauded, and he stood up and he made that speech.

It was a written speech. It had to be written because of War Department regulations. Kuroki read it and it was his own. He was stopped several times for applause. He started out by telling the difficulty that he and his brother had had in getting in the Army in the first place. And then of getting into the Air Force. And how he had then asked for action. And to get into that sort of action had taken months, months of pressure, from his own self because nobody was helping him on it. He finally made it and he made it all the way to the Ploesti oil fields where that particular attack made all the difference in the world in the Americans' status -- the Allied status. And he told about this very simply. Not asking for anything. Not giving them anything. Simply telling them this is the way it happened. He was stopped by applause two or three times. Well, when he finished, after telling them about all his experiences and that he had applied for and expected to get service in the Pacific, it couldn't help but be seen that this was just an American guy. There was a standing ovation. This report came from both the Army captain and from my husband who was sitting down in front.

My husband said that as far as he could see there wasn't a person in the Garden Court Room of the Palace Hotel, which was jammed, who didn't stand up. That many of them were weeping. My husband came home and told me and later the captain too, told me that the person they noticed most of all was Henry Kaiser, of the Kaiser shipyards, who was standing in front with tears running down his face and applauding madly.

Well, this to us was the beginning of the change of the whole attitude in California. Kuroki got marvelous publicity. The press, even the McClatchy press, even the Hearst press, gave him good coverage. This was a man in uniform reporting on what he had done and this is the way we brought him in. This was the way we wanted him reported. And this is the way he was reported. And publicity on both radio and in the press all the



Kingman: way up and down the coast was good. Of course he got special notice down in the southern part of the state where he was stationed at that time, on Rest and Recreation. Later on he made several speeches in other cities.

While he was here he also appeared on radio and we arranged, when I say we, I mean the Fair Play Committee, we arranged that he would be on radio with a young man who had been on Guadalcanal, a Guadalcanal veteran, a Marine private, Terrell Tennant, who was at that point stationed at the University of California for further training. He had been on Guadalcanal at the time of the terrific Japanese attack there and we had an interview with Kuroki and Terrell Tennant together on the radio. The things that Tennant had to say about the Nisei in the South Pacific were the most reassuring things that we had been able to get on the air to date. And they were being told by a veteran who had lived through one of the most brutal assaults that the Japanese had made on the U.S. Navy.

Levenson: I think the importance of that was that Japanese-Americans were in the South Pacific and fighting the Japanese.

Kingman: That's right. They were there and they were fighting the Japanese at the same time. So, this was the beginning of the change.

Levenson: What happened to Ben Kuroki later?

Kingman: Ben Kuroki went back to the middle-west. I don't know, he must have gone to school for a while, I'm not sure. I never did find out. The next thing I knew Ben Kuroki was the editor of a weekly newspaper in Nebraska. He married the daughter of a very well-to-do Japanese-American, probably a Nisei, I would guess from her age, and has, over the years, become a very substantial member of a small Nebraska community. And an increasingly politically conservative person. In fact, three or four years ago, when we were both awarded plaques of recognition by the Japanese American Citizens League, at the same time when Norman Thomas and Roger Baldwin were recognized, we each had to make a brief talk -- for some reason or other I was scheduled as the last speaker of the four, Norman Thomas spoke first, then Roger Baldwin. The third speaker was Ben Kuroki.

Now I had planned what I had to say around the story of Ben Kuroki and how it had liberalized California, thinking in terms of the Japanese-Americans. But I was so surprised and confused, that's the only word to use, by his extreme conservatism,



Kingman: both economic, political, social, any way you look at it -- that I had, over a ten minute period between speeches, to completely reconstruct what I had to say. So I went back and talked about Topaz instead. I couldn't possibly relate the change in California to what it was that Ben Kuroki had said that night.

Ben has changed a great deal. He was a sweet person. He's still a sweet person. I was delighted to talk with him. We were friends, we are still, and on very fine terms. But that night we were thinking on parallel tracks that never met.

### President Sproul Speaks in Los Angeles

Kingman: Shortly after Ben Kuroki's speech, we felt that there should be something in Los Angeles. At that time the Fair Play Committee executive for southern California was Katherine Kaplan whose husband was in the Physics Department at UCLA. A very highly respected woman whose husband at that time was doing extensive research of some kind for the government -- work that required him to have special security clearance. I remember before she took the job she had to find out whether it was all right with the FBI. Fortunately we were all right with the FBI so she was all right with us!

She was the director in southern California and we wanted very much to have Dr. Sproul, the President of the University of California, who was the Honorary Chairman of the Fair Play Committee, make a speech of some kind in southern California which would crystallize this change of opinion down there as well as what had been done up here. It was very difficult to get him. Very difficult. Because he was a very busy man in the first place. He had several campuses he had to cover all the time and a very, very difficult schedule. We had not been able to pin him down for a specific date, although, as the Honorary Chairman of the Committee, he was completely in sympathy with what we were doing.

Fortunately, it happened that Katherine Kaplan and Joe Kaplan, her husband, were very close personal friends of President and Mrs. Sproul, and one time when they were up here in Berkeley, were at the President's home for dinner. And she just faced him with it and said, "Will you please, when you're in Los Angeles, make a speech on this whole Japanese-American thing?" And he said, "Sure, I'll be glad to." And she pinned





Kingman: him down and got a date. So he spoke, I think it was to the California Club, a large and representative group, and made what was considered probably the best single statement made all during the war on the status of Japanese-Americans.\*

And it was a fine statement. It was most effective because he got almost the same kind of publicity, not just publicity, but certainly the same degree of favorable publicity as Sergeant Kuroki got up North. The status of the University in the South had always been very high, at that time particularly high because UCLA was just beginning to grow, beginning to be big and beginning to be important. And so what the President of the University of California had to say was of vital importance. So we feel that those two things, the Kuroki and Sproul speeches, marked the first real change in the attitude of the state.

From then on, we got opposition, but very little hate opposition. We got a great deal of support for constitutional rights; the rights of men in uniform; or the rights of people who were doing a job for the country which the public would never have accepted before as being the prerogative of anybody of Japanese ancestry. Opponents didn't talk very often anymore. Some did, but by and large there was no further extensive or rabid talk about "They'll never come back!" It was, sort of, "Well, when they come back." And first the Kuroki and then the Sproul speeches following, of course, the magnificent reports from the 442nd, were the outstanding factors triggering the change of attitude. I think that Dillon Myer and John McCloy would say the same thing. All during that period, the War Department and the WRA were emphasizing the fact that sooner or later there was going to be a return. They didn't say when. They didn't say anything about timing. But it became obvious that a return there was going to be. There had to be a change of opinion. There had to be a recognition of the fact that at least people in uniform had a status that nobody else among the Japanese had. In the public's mind even if they weren't able to accept anybody else, they couldn't not accept a veteran in uniform.

Levenson: Wasn't it true that Nisei in uniform were smuggled through California? Navy Intelligence, Army Intelligence, etc. That the Navy and Army were afraid of what would happen, even to servicemen?

Kingman: Oh yes. Very definitely. I know that one night we had two Nisei servicemen for dinner --

---

\*See Appendix III



Levenson: In Berkeley?

Kingman: Yes, in Berkeley. Yori Wada, who was one of the student editors of the Daily Californian, and who was being shipped to the South Pacific, was one. Yori was subsequently an honored member of the California Youth Authority, and is currently one of San Francisco's Civil Service Commissioners. He and a buddy -- I don't remember his name -- came in to Berkeley by bus under cover of darkness. They were shipping out with other GIs early the next morning. They had told us they were coming. So we picked them up and brought them home for dinner and sneaked them back down, also under cover of darkness, so they could get out of town without being seen.

Levenson: How realistic do you think these fears were?

Kingman: Not at all. I never was impressed with the possibility that anybody -- at least around the San Francisco Bay Area -- that anybody at that time, anybody in uniform, going about his own business, would have been interfered with. He might have had some dirty looks. He might have been refused service, because that was the way it had always been. But I don't think anything violent would have occurred. I just don't think so. I always wondered if maybe one of the reasons for that secrecy was that the authorities were still not ready to let the general public know how much was being done in the South Pacific by these Nisei. I don't think people realized.

#### Attitudes of the Press

Levenson: You mentioned your relations to the press, and particularly the McClatchy press.

Kingman: Well, probably our most friendly relationship was with the San Francisco Chronicle. This was largely due to the fact that Chester Rowell was one of their editors and was one of our Board of Directors. The fact that he was one of their editors would indicate a certain liberality in their point of view. They went pretty much in the other direction a couple of times during the war, but by and large they were very open-minded, gave us good support. The Oakland Tribune never joined the outspoken opposition.

The Hearst press, of course, reflected the old Yellow Peril theory of the Hearst Dynasty and was not friendly at any



Kingman: time -- not any part of the Hearst press.

Levenson: Did you ever attempt to get in?

Kingman: No, no. Didn't attempt to at all. The McClatchy press I felt could be a little different.

Levenson: What papers did they publish?

Kingman: The Sacramento Bee, the Modesto Bee, the Fresno Bee. The "Bee" papers as they are known. Mr. McClatchy had long been very active in and influential in the Joint Immigration Committee which was strongly anti-Japanese and was strongly in favor of the Exclusion Acts. They were a natural ally of the Native Sons of the Golden West and other organizations -- the farm organizations, the agricultural groups that were strongly in favor of, not only evacuation, but permanent exclusion.

We had a feeling, and when I say we I mean the members of the Fair Play Committee, the executive group, and I think Chester Rowell would have borne me out on this but I'm not sure, I can't quote him on this but at any rate I'm sure we conferred with him on it -- that the McClatchy press, as such, was not as adamant as the Hearst press. They had a personal thing about it all. Yes. But not a professional thing. With them it was personal, rather than otherwise.

Levenson: When you say personal, do you mean economic?

Kingman: No. I think Mr. McClatchy just felt that way. Another thing is they had papers all down the San Joaquin Valley. Of course that indicates a strong economic factor. And a great deal of the anti-Japanese feeling was in the San Joaquin Valley because of the agricultural interests. So this would be economic. There was economic but there was also a personal feeling, based on economics. Whereas the Hearst position -- I can't think that the Hearst press was particularly personal, this is just something they had taken on as the Yellow Peril. And this was something they had to be consistent about. And they were consistent about it. I may be wrong. But this is the feeling we had.

I don't remember when it was, I really don't remember -- it might have been '43, it might have been '44 -- I got an appointment with Miss Eleanor McClatchy in Sacramento. I went to talk to her and asked her if she realized that there were other points of view, that we had much documentation to refute many of the things that the Bee papers, that is, the McClatchy papers, were publishing, and I wanted to ask her if she would





Kingman: be interested in getting such material. On a personal basis, rather than just getting it through the office. We were always sending things out, and I wanted to know if she would be interested in seeing them personally.

Well, she was most gracious. I don't think I talked to anybody in the opposition, over the years, who could have been more gracious than she was. At the same time, she showed no evidence of change of opinion, or change of policy. She made no promises, other than she would like to see the material. And that was as far as it went. Period.

But it wasn't very long after that we sensed through the clippings we received a little lessening of what we had felt was a pretty vicious attack on the part of the McClatchy press. It became less vicious. It became more general, not a softening exactly, but different. There was a difference. I don't think there's any question about it. We all felt that. And whether it did any good or not, I don't know. I think it maybe did us some good. But there was a little difference, I'm sure. They still maintained the same position but I think with a different attitude.

The McClatchy papers and, of course, in southern California, the Los Angeles Times, were all pretty bad. The Chronicle was the best of the lot. The San Francisco News wasn't bad at all. The editor was Frank Clarvove and another friendly one of the editors was Paul Edwards who was also on the Board of Trustees at Stanford University. But Frank Clarvove was good. The San Francisco News was a Scripps-Howard paper, but quite independent and it gave us, not help, but not abuse. Put it that way. The Oakland Tribune was not really unfriendly -- was often quite friendly.

Levenson: Fair coverage?

Kingman: Yes, fair coverage. I would say fair coverage. And in fact, at the meeting in Sacramento where the Fair Play Committee later was finally dissolved to become The California Federation for Civic Unity, Frank Clarvove, the editor of the San Francisco News, was the main speaker. So he had definitely a sympathetic view toward the whole thing. I can't think much of anything else about the press in general, other than the fact that it was pretty awful. I mean the California press was really -- it was a devastating feeling every morning to open the mail and read what was being said. Because it was based so much on nothing but rumor which was obviously being fed by a small group of people like the "Ban the Jap" group. And, to some lesser extent, by



Kingman: the Native Sons, and to a still lesser extent by the American Legion. None of whom I think, were bad people. They simply were scared to death. They were scared to death of what they thought of as just plain Japs.



## VI THE RETURN

### Fair Play Committee Policy on Resettlement

Levenson: You said earlier that the Committee did not do good works, as such, but you did help individuals in ways that you hoped would help more than just the individual family. Could you give me an example of the sort of thing you did?

Kingman: Yes, I think so. After the exclusion order was lifted [December 17, 1944] we ourselves didn't do anything about getting housing for returnees or jobs. Of course if we heard of anything, we would tell them and if they wrote to us we would try to refer them to the proper people and places. One instance would be a Mr. and Mrs. Frank Manaka who were released from, I think Topaz, either in December 1944 or January of 1945. They were released and given permission to return to Monterey where they had asked to come. So the thing that we did which was typical of what we tried to do as often as we could, was to write to the Manakas and tell them that we had secured the enthusiastic consent of several people in Monterey to act as backstops, in case they had a little too much flak thrown at them when they got back. And these people were, for instance, the editor of a local paper, the principal of the high school, the dean of the high school and also the dean and the principal of the Pacific Grove high school, which is a little town next door, and even out in Carmel Valley, we had two people out there alerted who were ready to give any kind of advice and help, as I say, to try and absorb some of the difficulties that the Manakas might meet in coming home. This is the sort of help we tried to give, not the board and lodging kind of thing, but rather to have people in the community so conditioned by the time they returned that they were ready to receive them. Or at least ready to be reasonable, on the return of some of these people.

Levenson: When you wrote to them you sent them the names and addresses of all these supportive people. But before that you had given





- Levenson: them what you obviously thought was a realistic warning that they might face difficulties, particularly with fishing.
- Kingman: That's right.
- Levenson: Would you give an example? How about your letter to the Manakas, who were thinking of returning to Monterey.
- Kingman: I told them in the first place that I was glad to receive their letter and I quoted them a statement which was made by our fieldworker, who had been travelling around the state, to some of the hot spots, to determine the public feeling and to find out the potential support of the War Department, if and when, the evacuees were allowed to come back. Of course I said I hoped the report didn't discourage them too much but this is the quotation from our fieldworker.

"One potential troublespot, the only one mentioned, is the fishing industry. Before the war, fairly keen competition existed in this industry between the Sicilians and the Japanese. Now, the former have it all to themselves and they will have to get accustomed to the idea of the Japanese competition again. The rivalry between the two groups was never excessive but it might be unfortunate if the Japanese fishermen were the first to show up in the community. Aside from the economic factor, the usual stories are circulated about the Japanese naval officers disguised as fishermen, fishing boats meeting Japanese vessels at sea and so forth. Many people on the Monterey peninsula, otherwise well disposed, would be nervous at seeing Japanese going fishing again off the coast during the war. It would be advisable, I think, to pass this on to WRA and especially to Poston, where most of the Monterey fishermen were sent." \*

We felt that they should know what they were up against. At the same time, we gave them the names and addresses of the people who were certain to give them all possible assistance.

- Levenson: Influential people.
- Kingman: That's right. All influential people. And highly respected in the community. And not any of them participating in activities in the community which were, in any way, open to criticism by anybody. Pretty fine, they were pretty fine people. And they were willing to stand up and be counted in those days. They were pretty strong. So I would say that was indicative of the way we tried to help the returning evacuees.

---

\*From papers of the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play. Archives: The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley



Levenson: You mentioned that your one major disagreement with Dillon Myer centered on the failure of WRA to provide housing for the returnees. Did you make any specific effort to bring about a change of that policy?

Kingman: Oh! Yes! Early in 1945 we saw that the Washington office of WRA was not being given a true picture of the tremendous housing shortage all along the Pacific Coast. So I went back to Washington again, and this time talked with representatives of the Federal Housing Authority. They could give me no hope for federal help. Before going to Washington, I had tried, unsuccessfully, to get WRA, through Dillon Myer, to reconsider his decision to close all relocation centers by a "time certain" -- a date when all evacuees would be forced to leave the centers, either to return to the West Coast or to find employment and housing elsewhere.

We felt that as the federal government had forcibly removed them from their homes, the government had a definite responsibility to find housing for them if they were to be forcibly ejected from the relocation centers. We felt also, that at least one center should remain open until all evacuees could find adequate housing elsewhere.

At this point, we definitely disagreed with Dillon Myer, who was adamant in his insistence that all centers be closed. His main argument was based upon his unwillingness to be responsible for what he feared would be another form of Indian reservation, with its stultifying results.

Our disagreement with WRA was so strong that I, reluctantly, went back to Washington to take it up with Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior. This was difficult for me to do, because we had never had a really strong difference with Dillon Myer. In fact, it was the full extent of our disagreement during the entire war. In retrospect, I am glad to say that I was wrong, and he was right. (I've told him so, several times, to our mutual amusement!)

The last of the evacuees left the centers on schedule, and, as Myer had predicted, they were gradually absorbed by the Japanese community, largely around Los Angeles. True some of them did have to live, temporarily, in trailers, but the Indian Reservation syndrome was avoided and there is no hard core remnant of evacuation left somewhere in the western desert as a reminder of our American version of the concentration camps of World War II.



Kingman: One rather desperate thing I tried while in Washington was to arrange an evening appointment with Anna Roosevelt Boettiger who was then living in the White House with her parents. I was to go to the White House at eight o'clock on the evening of April 12, just one day before I had to return to Berkeley. I hoped to get Mrs. Boettiger to enlist her mother -- and then her father -- in our efforts to either provide housing for the returnees or to let them stay in the centers until housing could be assured.

I remember that I was to meet with a group of Nisei later in the evening, to give them a report on the situation in California. At six o'clock that evening I left my hotel room and was stunned by the huge headlines on the evening paper "ROOSEVELT IS DEAD."

Needless to say, I didn't go to the White House that night, but I did go to the meeting later on. When I got back to my hotel room I wrote a long letter to my husband and daughter, trying to express to them some of the paralyzing shock that overwhelmed the capital. I have a copy of part of that letter here.

Levenson: Please read it.

Kingman: This is what I wrote

Washington, D.C., April 12, 1945, Midnight

This evening I was late for a meeting. I was late because my cab driver was crying, and took me past my destination, which was unfamiliar to me.

Shortly after entering the cab on New York Avenue, I saw that my driver was crying. I said nothing. There was nothing for me to say.

Then he spoke, and as well as my wretched memory can recall, this is in part what he said. "Lady, we have lost a great friend. Lady, there can never be a friend like the friend that we have lost. He was the friend of all the poor people. He was the friend of all of the ignorant people. He was the friend of all of the people who were too weak to be friends for themselves. He was the friend of little children, and most of all of the little poor children who never had a chance.





Kingman:

"He was a friend from the very beginning, when nobody else was their friend, and he didn't just talk like a friend, but he fought for his friends. And now he's gone, and all of us have lost the best, the strongest, the finest, most courageous man we ever knew. He did more to give a chance to people who never had a chance before than anybody else ever did. He gave them jobs, and food, and medicine, and self-respect. And he never quit fighting the people -- even his own kind of people -- who wanted to take those things away from the people who needed them."

And then the cab driver named over the hospitals, and the public works, and the dams, and the forests, and the rivers, and the rehabilitated areas, and the rehabilitated people.

"And his wife is a lovely lady who has been feet and eyes for him. She has been a friend in a very special way to groups of people who have never had that kind of a friend before.

"When I heard that he was dead, Lady, I just knelt down on the floor and cried, and my wife said, 'Tommy, why did God take away the leader of our great country just now when we need him most?' And, Lady, I really couldn't answer. We were both crying, and I told my wife there was no reason but God, and the way He works we aren't supposed to understand, but if He took our friend He probably expected us to find a leader somewhere in our great America -- and we both got up and stopped crying."

Then the cab driver and I both realized that we were far beyond my destination, and he took me back to it. When I got out of the cab I shook his hand, and it was a big hand -- a black hand, and the tears were still on his fine black face.

#### Resettlement in Berkeley: Jane Davis

Levenson:

You were going to tell me about Jane Davis who was so wonderful in helping the Japanese resettle in Berkeley.



Kingman:

She was the wife of William Davis who was acting general secretary of Stiles Hall. Naturally, she knew many of the Nisei students. Well, she was a warm, generous, kind person whom everybody loved and who loved everybody. She was always inclined to do her own thing and that own thing was usually in relation to disadvantaged people. You just realized it if you tried to figure what Janie Davis had been doing any one week that an awful lot of the time was spent with people who needed help of some kind. So it was a natural thing that when the War Department permitted persons of Japanese ancestry to come back to this area, it was perfectly natural that some of those people whom she had known before would ask her if she had any idea about where they might find a place to live or how to get a job.

Our Committee, as you know, didn't have anything to do with finding housing but, naturally, I would see Jane from time to time and I soon saw that she was quietly setting up a resettlement office in her kitchen. She had gone out and gotten herself a little card file and was making out names of people who wanted to come back who had let her know. And, of course, the grapevine got going pretty soon and evacuees who had lived in Berkeley before found that Jane was willing to try to find them places to live or something to do and it seemed that, before very long, there was a stream of people coming into her house, and she did a magnificent job! I can't tell you how many she helped. I'll try to find out for you how many people she was able to find places to live in this general area. I suspect that there were other people in other communities doing the same thing but I think Jane Davis should be mentioned because she did what we felt and as far as I know everybody felt, was the outstanding job of just an ordinary human being doing a job that she felt ought to be done.

Incidentally, one of the interesting things that we did together on this. Nothing to do with resettlement whatever. But, it was the sort of thing that sets you up once in a while when you're working terribly hard. You remember I told you about Ben Kuroki, speaking at the Commonwealth Club? Well, after he spoke at the Commonwealth Club, he was on radio for a while and then because he was tired we brought him over here to Berkeley and he had supper that night at Jane Davis' -- Jane and Bill Davis'. One of the perfectly charming skills that Jane Davis had was that of cooking. She was the most imaginative cook I've seen in my life. And the thing that she specialized in, at least in those days, was apple pie. Just plain apple pie, but I never tasted such apple pie in my life. It happened that she had one of those Jane Davis apple pies for dinner that night.



Kingman: Well, Ben Kuroki had been in the Army just long enough to be awfully hungry for some good food I guess. And he couldn't get enough to eat. He was just a little fellow but he ate and ate and ate that pie. So that when he left he was appreciative and spoke very warmly to her. It just happened that the next day or the day after, I had to go to Los Angeles and at the same time, Mr. Kuroki, well, Sergeant Kuroki, was at the Rest and Recreation center down in Santa Monica. So I called Jane and aksed her if she'd make a pie for Ben Kuroki. She said, "Of course I will." So she stayed up half the night I guess, anyway, she made the pie. I had it in time to take the San Francisco Daylight, because there being no planes available for us in those days, we travelled by train. Every seat was full. Of course the trains were jammed and I sat with that pie in a box, very hot when I first got it and carried it in my lap all the way to Los Angeles and then out in the little street car that went out to Santa Monica. After waiting for Ben for about an hour I finally got the pie to him, slightly crumpled. But it was still Jane Davis' pie and I think that he had a great deal of enjoyment knowing that there were still people who liked to do things like that.

And I suppose it was that attitude on her part, on Jane's part that made her so successful in dealing with people and their needs. She had a very great sensitivity in recognizing need and that was one of the things that, I think, made it possible for her to do this resettlement job which I don't know of anybody else having done.

Levenson: It's remarkable. You said she had no previous experience?

Kingman: No, none at all. None at all. She was an English major in college. She wasn't terribly well. She hadn't worked, done any office work. She'd done some teaching, in a private school but no, no, she had no preparation for this at all. Other than the fact that she just loved human beings and never could stand to see anyone hurt.

Levenson: I just noticed a letter in the files of the Fair Play Committee from Ben Kuroki saying that every time he thinks of you he thinks of that marvelous pie!

Kingman: That's right, that's right. Ben was most appreciative. He had a lot of kidding about it, of course, from his buddies down there, the men in the air force.





### Effects of Relocation on Japanese-American Attitudes

Levenson: I wonder what happened to many of the Japanese as a result of their wartime experiences. You mentioned earlier that the Japanese American Citizens League had its wartime headquarters in Utah. Possibly, as a result of this many of them became Mormons?

Kingman: Yes, because so many of the Utah Mormons treated them well -- even sympathetically, many of them became Mormons. Many of them are still Mormons. The Japanese community, as such, even before the war, was always a very conservative community. There were very, very few of the Issei who would be considered anything but quite conservative. Both socially and politically, except that they couldn't participate in politics. But if they had been able to, they would have been definitely on the conservative side.

During the war the Japanese American Citizens League which, as you know, is made up of Nisei (plus Sansei now) only, had their headquarters in Salt Lake City and as many of them became Mormons then, many of them had also, I would say, inherited, as many Americans do, the political thinking of their parents. Most of the young conservatives in politics now a days had very conservative parents. And most of the liberals, had liberal parents. And this is the way it worked then. So that following the war, many of them became extremely conservative and those who have come back to southern California, a large number of Issei but also of the Nisei, have become very conservative. They are, many of them, residents of either Los Angeles or Orange County and, I would say, very typical of the general population of those two counties. Now that doesn't mean that there aren't any others. Because we do have very strong liberal members, as well as a certain lesser number of activists.

The young high school group is one that's been very interesting to watch because there is no longer the same type of family relationship and obligation that there used to be before World War II. They are now third or fourth generation. And you see them down on the streets of Berkeley, out of Berkeley High School, as a part of the extreme activist group. Not very many of them, but some of them. Whereas it never would have happened prior to the war. And this is happening all over the state of course. And we find some of those activists clear back in New York, at Columbia University and elsewhere. That's the way it goes.



Palace Hotel Conference on Long-Term Strategy

Levenson: Since the Fair Play Committee held that it was not its policy to give personal assistance to the returnee, what specific actions, if any, did you take?

Kingman: Our main objective was to get agencies of the federal government to take as much responsibility as possible. We also tried to act as coordinator of private groups, churches, educators, welfare associations etc. to see that their various programs supplemented rather than overlapped each other.

One rather important move was in calling a two day strategy conference which was held in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco on January 10-11, 1945. The Committee had long urged a public statement from the War Department and the Department of the Interior to the effect that they recognized their responsibilities to the returnees 'If and When' the War Department permitted their return. This reassurance came quickly upon the announcement by the War Department on December 17, 1944, that exclusion was no longer necessary.

(Because of the importance of this conference, I have refreshed my memory of it by going over an account by Atlee E. Shidler in his M.A. thesis "The Fair Play Committee - A Study in the Protection of the Rights of Minority Groups," pp. 193-195. See footnote, page 32.)

Our job was to enlist and encourage the various government and private agencies to undertake the details of the return and well being of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry -- a return too often threatened by rejection in their home communities. The strategy conference was aimed at just that. The conferees were informed by memo, prior to the meeting, that there would be (1) discussion of coordination of efforts of existing social, civic, religious, interracial and government agencies in behalf of returning evacuees, (2) provision of organizational machinery toward that end and (3) permanent plans and a program for an ongoing organization applicable to other problems of race and cultural relations.

Among the two hundred people who attended the conference were representatives of sixteen government agencies and nearly fifty private organizations. Governor Warren was invited to present the opening address, but was unable to attend because the legislature was just convening. However, he sent a telegram



Kingman:       which was read:

...it is the most important function of citizenship as well as government to protect constitutional rights, and I am please to note that plans are being made everywhere to discourage friction during the period of the return of Americans of Japanese ancestry to our state.

Government agencies included the War Manpower Commission, Federal Housing Administration, Farm Security Board, State Department of Education, United States Civil Service Commission, United States Employment Service, the War Relocation Authority, the State War Board, the California Department of Agriculture, the Federal Security Agency and the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice.

Private agencies included state and local welfare groups, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish organizations, both clerical and lay, ethnic groups including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Japanese American Citizens League, Chinese American clubs and Filipino organizations, the YMCA, YWCA, etc.

There was no attempt to make concrete plans. Rather, it was decided to outline what should and what could be done in various communities by the combined efforts of the agencies and groups represented. It was also decided to ask the Fair Play Committee and the American Council on Race Relations to undertake the implementation and coordination of the recommendations.

Thus we hoped to enlist interest throughout the state which would eventually result in ongoing collaboration of all sympathetic and responsible agencies in support of the rights of all racial minorities whenever it might be needed.





## VII CONCLUSIONS

### Studies of Social Scientists

Levenson: One of the things that I find impressive was that right at the start of relocation and resettlement, members of the University of California were studying the process. And I'd like to know what you remember about the work that was being done by Dorothy Thomas, Morton Grodzins and what you think of the publications that came out of that?

Kingman: It's awfully hard to say. Incidentally, it's been years since I've read them. Both Mrs. Thomas and Morton Grodzins used to be in and out of our office all the time. I knew Morton much better than I knew Mrs. Thomas but I knew them both quite well. They certainly tried very hard to do a careful, scholarly piece of work in their research which, of course, is very difficult to do concurrently with the period in which the history is made. It's much easier to do it after the fact rather than doing it during the period covered. But while I don't remember too much about Mrs. Thomas' book, I do remember Morton Grodzins' work that he did alone, and felt that it was especially good.

Levenson: It was Americans Betrayed.\*

Kingman: Yes, I felt that that was very good. I suppose that anybody who was as involved in the thing as I was, so close to the people that we were working with and for, that I possibly felt at the time, that this very careful scholarly approach was a little academic. I don't think it was really. I don't think it was. On the other hand I suspect that they thought that we were a little emotional which I don't feel that we were. As I told you in conversation another time, if we'd been emotional, we'd have gone crazy. We had to be just as cold and tough about this thing as the people did in the government.

---

\*Morton Grodzins. Americans Betrayed: Politics and the Japanese Evacuation. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1949.



Kingman: Otherwise we just couldn't possibly have operated.

Levenson: When you say academic, do you feel that they missed the human element?

Kingman: Well, quite naturally, and this is understandable, they had to deal largely in statistics. And you know statistics are drier even than people. Of course, I think one of the most magnificent pieces of research that was done was by Dorothea Lange, Paul Taylor's wife, who was a photographer authorized by the government to photograph the evacuation.\* The actual evacuation. Now that is a documentation which was certainly scholarly, it was certainly highly skilled and expert, and done on a very selective basis from her experience as a photographer, and yet, she had enough of the human clout, shall we say, in her pictures that I felt that that kind of documentation was even more worthwhile perhaps, than some of the books that came out. Of course I always wish that there would someday be the novel, that no one has come out with yet. Not really.

What they need -- I wish a Nisei would write -- I wish somebody who was in high school in one of the Centers and went out on a student relocation arrangement and then later went ahead and did whatever he wanted to do and was able to do, he or she, would write a book, the book, that hasn't come out yet. And that book would have to include the combination of the careful documentation, careful research plus the terrific tensions, as I say, the static in the atmosphere which can't come out of Caucasian members of a sociology department. They just can't do it. You don't expect it and you shouldn't. Academia is no place for it to originate, but it has to come out sooner or later.

#### Culture and Character as Factors in Successful Resettlement

Levenson: I know its hard but how would you sum up your experiences as executive secretary of the Fair Play Committee? Both Japanese-Americans and WRA officials like Dillon Myer and Bob Cozzens felt that your work eased their lives and work. What did you learn from those years that you feel could be applied to other situations of prejudice and discrimination?

Kingman: Well, as you say, it's an awfully hard thing to put your finger on. In the first place, this type of discrimination was a wartime thing. I mean this particular, not type, but

---

\*See Dorothea Lange, "The Making of a Documentary Photographer," Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1968.



Kingman: this particular discrimination was a wartime thing. And, the controversies around it were much sharper, more easily defined than are most prejudice situations. There was nothing subtle about it.

The discrimination was based, purely, on what people thought a person who looked like that and who came from that kind of a family would do. Now, all discrimination doesn't necessarily, isn't necessarily based on that, but I think most discrimination is based on fear! And there was certainly fear in those days! On the part of the general public, a fear of Japan and then an inability to dissociate the loyal from the disloyal.

With most discrimination, it seems to me -- I would say it's all based on fear of one kind or another -- it might be economic. In the different parts of the United States the discrimination against blacks is based on different things, the economy and tradition in the South and probably physical fear in the North. Which is an entirely different thing.

Learning from what we did, what might be done for other racial minorities, I can't help thinking, we had, even though we had a war to contend with, we had the breaks in having a highly literate, highly sensitive group which recognized the necessity of being visible. This is something, of course, that the blacks are recognizing now for the first time. They used to dislike their visibility but now they're getting a pride in being black. And that's the first step, probably, towards doing the sorts of things, on a different level than the Nisei did.

Now the Nisei segregated themselves, purposely went into this Army set-up in a segregated unit, to prove something. They didn't need it to prove it to themselves. They already had a rich cultural background. They didn't have to prove anything to themselves but they were out to prove to everybody else, and the fact that they were so successful meant that what we had to do was simply to interpret what they were doing. In other words, we had a lot of wonderful ammunition. In addition to that, we were working with the government.

We never worked against the government. While plenty of people in our organization thoroughly disapproved and spoke up strongly against evacuation of any kind at any time the Committee's official position was -- this is wartime -- evacuation is being ordered and we will support the government in that.





Kingman: But we were very eager that what the government did, while they were gone, would be done on a civilian basis and we kept that pressure on as much as we could. Urging that the Centers, for instance, not be taken over by the military which is what there was a lot of public pressure for. And even Tule Lake was only temporarily taken over by the Army at one time. I think that working for and with other minorities since then, I feel that one particular factor is still very, very sound. That is the absolute necessity for accentuating the positive relationships between and within different (or differing) groups, and building upon them, avoiding such negative aspects as might bring about the development of potential roadblocks.

It was a demanding period, an exhausting period but a thoroughly, thoroughly satisfying one. When it was over. It was frustrating many times and heartbreaking many, many more times. But once again, I always say it was the one white horse I brought in a winner. But it was just because they were what they were.

Levenson: The Japanese-Americans?

Kingman: Yes. That's right. It would be a different thing -- I don't mean that it would have come out differently, maybe it would have maybe it wouldn't -- but as I say, we had a choice group of people, persons, much more so than any of us realized when we started.

Levenson: Is that right?

Kingman: I knew individuals. I had ever since I was in high school, when I played basketball, I was a tall center and my side center was a little Japanese-American girl. Came up to about my elbow but we were great friends and she was the only Nisei friend I had, I think, until I was here as an adult and some of the Nisei students were at Stiles Hall, the University YMCA, I got acquainted with them. Then I met the Obatas at the time of the evacuation and their older son, Kim Obata became one of my very, very dear friends, he and his wife. And from then on I became better acquainted. I remember a young dentist, Dr. Takahashi, who lives here in Berkeley now. He and his wife Barbara who was a public health nurse, went to the relocation center in Topaz. All youngsters, everybody, not just youngsters, had to be vaccinated and take several shots before leaving. And how it could be done all of a sudden nobody knew and then it was suddenly arranged to get it done by Herrick Hospital and Barbara Takahashi was the head of the whole project.



Kingman: It was so incongruous you know. There she was, subject to being sent away to the relocation center and running practically the whole hospital for a couple of days.

The whole thing was incongruous, but since there was this type of person involved, it made our job, in many ways, easier. Because they had of course, a culture behind them for thousands of years, and it's a culture which, aside from some of the religious emphases which have been made, a culture which works right into ours very easily. They are industrial-economy minded, just as we are. At the same time I like to think that we are as sensitive in many ways as they are. So that helped us an awful lot. Helped in public relations.

But there were times when we didn't know what direction we were going in next.

Levenson: I'm not quite clear how it helped in the public relations, do you mean in terms of successes made?

Kingman: By the confidence we could have in what we were doing. We were not talking about somebody strange. We were not talking about somebody who was so different from us that they were impossible of understanding. They were just exactly like us. And many of them with the same types of educational background, which also helped.

Levenson: I think that would have been true of Berkeley, but would it have been true of many of the agricultural areas?

Kingman: Well, it's true as far as the Nisei were concerned. Because, as you know, they had the highest, per capita, number of college graduates of any racial group in the country. Including ours. And out of that group they had the highest per capita ratio of Phi Beta Kappas. And they also had, by ratio, the lowest juvenile delinquency record or criminal record, in fact it was so infinitesimal it couldn't be registered. So it was a very high class group of people that we were trying to interpret to an antagonistic public. But, how successful it would have been if it would have been a different type of person I don't know. I don't know. We always say that they did their own public relations, by being what they were!

Levenson: Perhaps in the end that is the answer.

Kingman: That's right. Sometimes that has to be interpreted, if the public is blind enough, or blinded enough. In this case I



- Kingman: think they had been blinded, rather than were blind.
- Levenson: Because the majority of the press, on the west coast, was hostile.
- Kingman: That's right. A great majority. And in relation to other minorities I don't think, in the same way, the general majority of the public is as much blinded as they are blind. In many instances, or course, it would be blinded. But mostly blind from many generations of whatever it is that creates discrimination.

### Insights into Race Prejudice

- Kingman: Of course we always took the position, and I don't think it was very intelligent of us sometimes, but we did take the position that given the facts the American public is an open-minded public. That given the facts, given the information, given the checks and balances of this on the one hand and that on the other, the pros and the cons, they'll come up with a fair assessment. And this is all that we were asking for.
- Levenson: And do you think you got it?
- Kingman: Eventually, yes. But it comes back to that thing again -- without the Nisei we could never had done it. Never. And the magnificent operation, I think, of the WRA and the very fine attitude of the War Department and the Justice Department. And by the War Department I mostly mean civilian War Department, plus the great majority of the military. The great majority.
- Levenson: You said something earlier about riding a white horse?
- Kingman: Well, I simply said that during one's lifetime one gets interested in various and sundry causes and does what one can at times and sometimes you're lucky and sometimes you're not. But as far as working with these loyal persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II was concerned, and doing what we could to make it possible for them to return after they were evacuated from the Pacific Coast, and after the magnificent job they did both in uniform and out, we can look back on it now and as I say, I've said to you and I've said to many people -- this is one white horse where I came in a winner. And it's probably as satisfying a feeling as anybody could have.





APPENDIX A

WAR COMES TO THE CHURCH DOOR

Diary of a Church Secretary in Berkeley, California, April 20 to May 1, 1942

Monday, April 20. This was a day I hoped to give almost completely to China Relief, but little jobs at the church kept me there till eleven, when I turned things over to a substitute and hurried away. A luncheon of the China Relief Committee, where everyone was pleased to know we have received in the first week 10,500 of Berkeley's 210,000 quota. Someone suggested we send out another 3,000 letters to a district not covered in our first 11,000 letters, so that devolved on me as secretary. Off I hustled to printer to order more copies of letter, pledge card and return envelope, to addressograph office to arrange for envelopes to be addressed, and back to my own office at the church to round up volunteers to handle the mailing job.

Army officers were looking over the parish house when I returned, making plans for use of the building as a control center for the registering and evacuating of Japanese from the Berkeley area. Dr. Loper, the minister, and I welcome the use of the church by the government, but wonder what some of the old-timers will say when the word gets around.

Tonight at 7:30 a special meeting of the Church Council was held, for presentation of this project. The Board of Trustees had already given their consent, but the Council had to discuss mechanics of how to get along, with fifteen organizations or more scheduled to use the building over the week-end. There was consideration of where the choir would rehearse, how they would reach the choir loft without going through Pilgrim Hall, what the Boy Scouts could do, where the lively Winthrop Leaguers, high school age, could meet. And when these issues had been settled Dr. Loper went on with another project: should the church extend hospitality



in some form to the Japanese being evacuated? He outlined his thought that through a committee of the Woman's Association arrangements could be made to have flowers in the various rooms, to open the church parlors and the kindergarden room, to have cots available for people to rest, to serve tea and fruit and sandwiches and have hosts and hostesses on hand to give the evacuees friendliness. When he asked for discussion no dissenting opinion was evident, though I suspected that here and there in the group enthusiasm was a bit thin. He suggested having a letter go out over his signature, expressing the church people's interest and sympathy to and the evacuees. Everything was approved, and as the meeting broke up into little groups Mrs. Fulmer remarked, "I wouldn't have missed this meeting for anything!" and Mrs. Brock said, "I'm proud of my church for initiating this!" Home at 10:45. Long day.

Tuesday, April 21. Dr. Loper drew up a first draft of the letter to be given the Japanese evacuees, and I phoned ministers of leading churches to be sure they would meet him at the Berkeley Fellowship luncheon this noon, to discuss it. I tried to get a head start on my church calendar for the printer, but couldn't catch Dr. Loper long enough to get information from him for it. He had two funerals and a death today, poor man. I've suggested that he not preach next Sunday on "Has Science Outmoded Religion?" as announced -- that when history, in the form of government evacuation of Berkeley citizens, comes to our doorstep he shouldn't ignore it. "Yes, yes," he says, on the fly, "but I can't think now. Maybe tomorrow I'll have a bright idea."

Mrs. Hadden phoned in to say that she had heard of the church's program for the Japanese and was so proud she wanted to weep, and Dr. Hadden wanted to be called on for duty as host on Saturday, if he could be of service.

Dr. Loper came back from luncheon with the Berkeley ministers and said his draft of the letter to evacuees would have to be done over, that their feeling was that all churches should have a share and not just the First Congregational













He gave a demonstration of his brush work, and ended with a brief announcement that he hoped to come back from his absence from Berkeley with a series of paintings of the desert. The sale of his pictures (\$3 to \$15) brought in some \$450, which will be used at the University as the Obata Scholarship, to be given to the student most in need because of war, regardless of race or creed. Madame Obata was not there -- probably at home, packing. Berkeley is going to miss her classes in Flower Arrangement, so popular up to December 7.

~~xxxx~~ Marion Rosen, ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ and I walked up the hill together. "It was such a lovely exhibit," she said in that gentle voice of hers with the merest hint of accent. "Everybody was so kind. I feel so sorry for the Japanese." And she would -- a refugee from Hitler herself, her own family scattered over the world, parents in England, sister in Sweden, brothers in Switzerland, and now suddenly even here in America she has become an enemy alien who must be careful to be in her room every night at curfew time.

My little house is beautifully dressed in new blue Chinese rugs which by a happy accident match the blue of my Hundred Babies tapestry bought years ago in Peking. The rugs are a loan, for the duration, from the Kajiwara's in San Francisco, and much as I admire them I have a guilty feeling of being a war profiteer.

Friday, April 24: Ran about the building sticking up signs, labeling the North Room "Lounge" and the parlor "Berkeley Church Hospitality Committee", etc. The Government officials had a long afternoon conference on procedure, beginning tomorrow. They have their room divided off and their own signs up: "Federal Security", "Federal Reserve Bank", "Employment Service" and the like. Many Japanese come to my door, and I wave them on to the door that says "Civil Control Station". The letter to the evacuees is ready now for distribution. Miss Ruth Price, busy teacher at Berkeley High School, phoned in to ask if she could work at the church as hostess tomorrow. "So many of the Japanese young people have been my students, you know," she said, "and I want to do anything I can to help." Dr. Raoul Auernheimer, who is to speak Sunday evening, called ~~to inquire about where he should go~~. Very appropriate to have a refugee from Naziism speaking at



a time when our own refugees are lining up in queues for evacuation. He said he liked the title I'd given him, "Hitler -- Today's Napoleon."

At the end of a long day of many interruptions, when I was in my late-afternoon sag, came a telephone call: "Is this the Congregational Church? Well, will you answer one question for me? Why do we have to be so nice to the Japs, feed them lunch, give them tea and hospitality? They aren't treating our boys that way." I drew a long breath and rose to the challenge, hinting that of course we with our higher (we think) standards wouldn't want to imitate what Japan was doing anyway, reminded her that someone once had said "Love your enemy," went on to describe the hectic week this had been with government plans changing from day to day and ours having to change as fast to keep up, told of various good and gentle Japanese who were as sensitive and humiliated by this experience as we would be, etc. "I know," the voice went on. "There are good ones and bad ones, I guess. I get all mixed up." "So do I," I admitted, and she laughed and I laughed, and she thanked me very nicely and hung up. Never did tell me her name.

The Berkeley Gazette came out tonight with an article saying "China Relief Drive needs about \$2000" and a paragraph about the various committee members and their help in boosting the cause along. "Miss Eleanor Breed, Secretary of the Committee, has helped considerably in her spare time." Spare time!

Saturday, April 25: Down to the church at 7:45 a.m., and it was something of a shock to find one soldier with gun stationed at the curb, and two at the door, with another inside at the door to the Control Station office. A big crowd of stenographers and government officers were all at their desks. Mrs. Kingman of the Fair Play Committee was receptionist, directing people hither and yon. The soldiers and their lieutenant were very considerate of the Japanese, I noticed, treating them like human beings. Good old America!

Dr. Loper was streaking here and there, greeting Japanese ministers, seeing that all the church hosts and hostesses were on their jobs and yet were out from under governmental feet. I had to haul one of our dear old men -- who considers his white hair a badge of special privilege -- out of the Large Assembly and explain











A telephone call: "Will there be church tomorrow? Oh, I thought maybe the Japanese were taking over."

The Berkeley Gazette this evening has a long full front-page story of the use of Pilgrim Hall for evacuation, telling of the army being quartered in the Nursery and ending with a long quote from our much-labored-over letter to the evacuees. There is also a long article I sent them about the changes in the Sunday program for the various church groups. And there is a congratulatory editorial on the China Relief Drive, which reached its quota of \$10,000 today. Good old Berkeley!

Sunday, April 26 -- Down to the church by 8, and Pilgrim Hall crowded, with people two-deep waiting in the Reception Room, and Mrs. Kingman standing at the doorway to the government office like the head waiter at a popular restaurant, giving out pink tickets with numbers on. Soldiers are still on guard at the doors, which must be startling to parents in the habit of unloading children there each Sunday morning. I stationed one of the men there to direct people around Pilgrim Hall and into the main church for services.

Dr. Loper's sermon on "Frying the Fiddler" was pretty good, considering that he hasn't had time all week to collect his thoughts. He hinted that I had nagged him into changing his subject at the last moment -- but he would have anyway. He spoke on how this evacuation that was going on behind the doors of Pilgrim Hall was the result of a stream poisoned at its source, saying that you couldn't name patly what was the particular cause any more than you could tell who crucified Jesus. Was it the Jews? the money-changers? Pilate? He spoke of some of the problems we are trying to meet, mentioning that one was to find people to take the much-beloved pets of the children who were having to depart and who didn't want their cats and dogs to be killed. One of the deaconesses met me at the close of the service. "I'd be glad to take a Japanese cat," she said, "if it will get along all right with my American cat."

Home from church late -- waited to see the wedding of a soldier and his bride, both new here from Minnesota.



Monday, April 27. Rainy and cold, and the soldiers at the door stand inside for shelter. "No Parking on this Street Today" signs along Durant and Channing, with exceptions for the army jeep. Everything was very quiet today. All 1100 Japanese were registered in the first two days, and this was the lull before the beginning of the actual evacuation. Today was assigned to the Quakers for hospitality, and they came very eager to be of help, and I had to tell them there were no Japanese today.

A miscellany of questions: "Are there any dogs left? I'll be glad to take one, only I don't want a good dog. I just want a mutt puppy."

"Do you have Chinese members of this church? My Japanese servant has had to leave, and I thought maybe you could find a Chinese for me. I just don't know what I'm going to do."

"Got any more dogs? I'd like one. I live in a trailer and work at Richmond shipping yard. And by the way, do you know where my wife and I should go to adopt a baby?"

One of the soldiers on guard mentioned that he'd been over to Miss Chandler's for strawberry shortcake, that she'd sent out word that all the soldiers at the church were invited. Little Miss Chandler has an unconquerable spirit. The deaconesses have tried for years to get her to go to a rest home, but she won't give up her independence and her modest little apartment next door to Pilgrim Hall. Deaf, crippled so she can't sit -- she can only lie down or hobble about on a crutch -- she reads avidly, ~~and~~ crochets bedspreads for an assortment of nieces, and occasionally shuffles into my office for a chat. Usually she catches me at a time when I'm too busy to shout into her ear phones, poor dear, and then she beams brightly and shuffles back out.

I decided Miss Chandler couldn't get the best of me, so I invited three of the soldiers up to dinner. Hurried to grocery and home to start things off, then got panicky about what would I do to entertain three young men all evening, so phoned Gertrude Jacobs at International House, and up she came. Three friends dropped in during the evening, and we had a lively game of skittles and much fun. The soldiers were from North Dakota and Arkansas and Oregon -- very nice lads.





I don't know whether it was this trio or some of the other soldiers, but a group ~~some~~ of them went down town with some of the Japanese boys the other night for dinner. That's a secret we aren't supposed to tell the Lieutenant.

Tuesday, April 28, the beginning of the evacuation. The pioneer group of evacuees was waiting at the church this morning, including lovely Ann Saito of the staff of International House, who had a secretarial job at Tanforan waiting for her; so she went ~~out~~ on the first bus. The Control Office has lists posted around its walls saying who is to go when, and many Japanese come to read. Among the first group was a pair of newlyweds, arm in arm, the bride with a collegiate bandana around her head and a flower in her pompadour, and a big American flag in brilliants on her lapel. There were two babies in baskets, a three-week-old little girl, and a six-months-old boy. And everyone, young, middling and old, wore a tag around his neck or hanging from his lapel, with name printed on and a number, for his family group. One pert little college girl in slacks had her name tag around her neck tied to a chain from which dangled her Phi Beta Kappa key. The preliminary group today is a small one. Their duffle bags were loaded into the big bus, and the evacuees went aboard, waving merrily and cracking jokes with their friends who were to follow in the next few days. But as the bus pulled out Ann Saito was crying.

This is the Baptists' turn at hospitality, and they've sent over a nice group of women but also a retired minister who is just too godly. He bustles in everywhere and goes around shaking hands with the evacuees and saying a hearty, "God bless you!" I caught Ann and Michi looking at each other with a twinkle he missed. Dr. Loper is embarrassed. That sort of thing is just what he wanted to avoid -- yet how to deal with a fellow minister?

Wednesday, April 29: When I arrived at the church at 8 I found a long line of baggage down the block from Channing to Durant, with duffle bags, suit cases, folding chairs, ironing boards, cartons, bundles, blankets, card tables, cribs. Noted one good looking suitcase with stickers saying "Rome", "Paris", and one



that caught me up short: "Hotel Metropole, Beyrouth". The street was blocked off, with policemen at each end permitting only Japanese unloading more bundles to go through. Pretty soon along came a big moving van and trailer, and the call went forth for young men to help. In a jiffy the Japanese lads had organized a sort of old-fashioned fire brigade and were swinging the bundles and duffle bags along a line and into the truck, joking and laughing as they did so, perhaps glad to have activity instead of the monotony of waiting. I note that they take pains not to speak Japanese.

Pilgrim Hall when I went in was already a-bustle -- people reading the announcement boards, learning their assignments to Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, finding the location for their groups and settling down with admirable patience to wait. Dr Loper was busy organizing hospitality, pulling tables into place, working out a system to speed up the serving, and soon tea and sandwiches were going the rounds. This is the Methodists' day, and they're going at it vigorously, feeding not only their multitude of Japanese but offering luncheon for the government workers and coffee and sandwiches for the soldiers and the bus drivers. They have even made so many sandwiches they have some left over, for the Presbyterians to inherit tomorrow.

I am continually on a trot -- now out in front to see off a bus load of evacuees, now back to hunt up the janitor and get him to refill the t.p. and towels in the rest rooms, now upstairs to look for Dr. Loper, now back to my office because the switchboard is buzzing, then off again for the janitor to get him to turn off the heat. Lucky I got my calendar off to the printer last night.

Dean Deutsch of the University, out of a clear sky, wrote us today:

"Allow me to express my own appreciation for the attitude which you and your church have taken with reference to the Japanese and the American Japanese who are being evacuated. Your action has been one that is proper and will impress these people with the fact that the ideals which we profess we try to put into practice. If any criticize you for it, my only thought would be that they are not truly Americans or Christians.



"People fail to recall that these people who are being evacuated have had no charges against them individually; they are not guilty of misconduct. They are being removed because of fear, which is gripping the hearts of some people. Personally, I feel that our country will someday feel ashamed of its conduct in this entire matter. In the meantime, however, it is good to know of actions such as you and the members of your church have taken." Good old Deutsch. I'm including that first paragraph on the calendar -- though so far if anyone in the church disapproves of this project I haven't been able to smoke him out.

Thursday, April 30 . Down to the church by 8 again, and again the long high line of duffle bags and miscellany along Dana Street, with soldiers on guard. The first groups of evacuees were already in their places, and hordes of Presbyterian women were flying around in the kitchen and up and down the hall. I saw one sentimental old lady sympathizing so warmly with one family that the little girl, aged ten or so, was sobbing her heart out. I caught Mrs. Stanley Hunter, <sup>Presbyterian</sup> minister's wife, pointed out the old lady, and told her to scold the daylights out of her.

A Japanese young man came to the office and said, "Would you mind if I left the church a small donation? We appreciate very much what you are doing."

"Goodness," I said, "what we are doing is only a small thing -- we'd like to do lots more. But we'd be happier if you would ~~save~~ your donation for some play equipment for the children when you get to camp."

The man smiled and bowed. "We do appreciate what your church has done," he said again, adding as an afterthought, "I'm a Buddhist."

This morning the Sato and Obata families left. I'll always remember the wedding of Kimio Obata and his bride, Masa Sato, both graduates of the University, which was held in our big church last fall because their little Japanese Congregational Church was too small for their many friends. Madame Obata arranged the flowers, and the autumn coloring of the giant chrysanthemums was reflected in the gold dresses of the six bridesmaids. The pastor of their own church gave the benediction in Japanese, and the groom didn't kiss the bride, but otherwise it was a thoroughly American wedding, even to a big extravagant reception and dinner at the Claremont Hotel afterward, ~~xxxxxxshots~~ with many flashlight





photographs being taken. Today I took snapshots of Kim and his bride before the church where they were married, this time with a background of miscellaneous luggage, and with identification tags in their lapels. They have been good sports about accepting their setbacks. Their Oakland shop closed promptly after December 7 -- it had been a wedding gift -- and they have been working day and night to clear up the Berkeley Obata Studio where their parents have been for so long. Professor Obata, the father, is taking the evacuation well. He has a small notebook in which he is sketching the process -- a silhouette of a soldier at the door, a picture of the evacuees getting on the buses with the church tower high above. Mr. Sato, father of the bride, is a deacon in the Japanese Congregational Church. He sent a dwarf maple tree from his garden to Mayor Gaines with a letter asking him to accept it "in appreciation of the privilege of having lived in Berkeley and of the protection my family and myself have enjoyed," and he gave a dwarf pine to Dr. Loper. I tried to tell him I was sorry this war had to come along and dislodge him and his family from their home, and he smiled with tears in his eyes and said in his broken English, "It is because the people forget God. Back there in Japan -- the people forget God."

Today on the same bus went the Takahashi family, long residents of Berkeley, Quakers, all graduates of the University. The elder Takahashi planned the gardens three years ago for Treasure Island.

Our soldiers quartered in the church Nursery are bemoaning the fact that soon they will pull out of here. They've liked this job, they tell us, with its coffee and sandwiches in the afternoon and the Boy Scout room to lounge in, and people inviting them out to dinner. One of the soldiers who comes up from Tanforan <sup>around a tree</sup> ~~in~~ with the buses played hide-and-seek/this morning with a Japanese lad of five, and drew quite a gallery. A group of Japanese high school girls stood about chatting with one of the soldiers on guard, and I heard one of them say coyly, "We hope you'll be stationed at our camp so we'll see you some more."

Friday, May 1 -- Down to the office earlier than ever -- 7:30 a.m., as the first bus was to leave at 8. Ambulances were sent around to the homes to collect eight cases of mumps and ten of measles, today, to be taken to the hospital in San Bruno until



recovery. There were more of the lame and halt among the evacuees coming into Pilgrim Hall today, it seemed. One paralyzed old man was carried in on the back of his son; one old lady had to be lifted up the steps of the bus. Dislocation from their homes and familiar surroundings is going to be hard on people as frail as these.

Today's babies were particularly enchanting. One, wrapped in blue blankets, was a mite ten days old. I stopped by a basket holding a baby somewhat older, wrapped in pink. "What's his name?" I asked.

"Ronald," his mother said. "He's third-generation American, so of course he has an American name."

My pet was Patty Yoshida, aged eight months, dressed in a knitted pink jumper suit that set off her chubby red-apple cheeks. Her pretty young mother agreed readily to my wish to take snapshots of her, but alas, they will be in black-and-white, and Patty, to do her justice, should have color film.

Another of the International House staff, Marii Kyogoku, left today with her family, and many from the House came down to say good-bye, including Lo Jung-pang of Peking, graduate of Yenching University, who has been studying for his Ph.D. here. Marii was in Group 5, which was assigned the North Room upstairs for assembling, ~~and when we got up there~~ <sup>but</sup> there didn't seem to be enough helpers to pass plates of sandwiches and tea, so Mr. Lo helped. Another picture to remember: the young Chinese serving the Japanese evacuees as they have to leave their American homes. Good old China!

And hooray -- Julean Arnold called this afternoon to say that in the final mopping up of the United China Relief drive Berkeley had turned in \$14,000, and he was going to wire the news to Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

Dr. Loper had me outline for Mrs. Kingman of the Fair Play Committee the steps of development in our work here with the evacuees, in the hope that other churches may want to do something along the same line. Mrs. Kingman feels that even the little we have done has been helpful in changing the attitude of some who were most bitter, citing one Japanese who was a veteran of the first World War and who now is removed from his successful shop in Chinatown and sent into camp



as if he were a suspect. "The fact that he came here to an American church and was given friendly treatment," she says, "helped a lot to soften his hurt and disillusionment. 'I know now there are Americans who don't hate us,' he told me, 'and that makes a world of difference -- just to have friends.'"

A Methodist minister who has been working in Montana among the Japanese in internment camps commented to Dr. Loper today, "Your church is doing a fine job - but if it were in some areas it would be burned to the ground." He cited horror tales of hysteria such as we have feared, but have not found, in our area. It came over me suddenly, and with shock, that the soldiers who have been on guard have been here not to protect us from the Japanese so much as to protect the Japanese against us.

The last bus left just at noon, and it was a lovely sunny day. I'd hate to leave Berkeley when it looks so beautiful!

And then as the government workers dwindled away came the business of collecting signs again, replacing ~~church~~ posters, clearing up debris, shrinking back into the business of being a church again. The old office seems unearthly quiet, and I'm not sure I'm going to like it.





JAPANESE-AMERICAN AVIATOR TELLS OF FAMED PLOESTI RAIDBlazing 10,000 Gallon Gasoline Tank Explodes Above Bombing Planes

From address by T/Sgt. Ben Kuroki, Japanese-American wearer of Distinguished Flying Cross for Ploesti raid, given before the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco on February 4, 1944.

"When you live with men under combat conditions for 15 months, you begin to understand what brotherhood, equality, tolerance and unselfishness mean.

Under fire, a man's ancestry, what he did before the war, or even his present rank, doesn't matter at all. You're fighting as a team--that's the only way a bomber crew can fight--you're fighting for each other's life and for your country, and whether you realize it at the time or not, you're living and proving democracy.

Ours was the first Liberator group sent to the European theater. As soon as we had our base set up in England, I applied for combat duty.

We were in Libya three months. In all that time, we were able to take a bath only once, and that was when we were given leave to fly to an Egyptian city for that specific purpose. That was the only time we shaved, too.

Making Spaghetti Fly-- And Rice

Our group was going on raids about every other day while we were in the desert, and they were all pretty rough. We bombed Rommel's shipping lines over and over at Bizerte, Tunis, Sfax, Sousse and Tripoli in Africa. Then we started in on Sicily and Italy.

We had some boys of Italian parentage flying with us, and whenever we took off to bomb Naples or Rome I'd kid them about bombing their honorable ancestors. "We're really going to make spaghetti fly today," I'd say, and they'd retort that they couldn't wait to knock the rice out of my dishonorable ancestors.

We bombed Sicily and Southern Italy at altitudes of about 25,000 feet, and it really gets cold at that height.

Even at that height we could see our bombs breaking exactly on their targets, and as much as an hour after we had left the targets we could see the smoke rising from the fires we had caused.

It gave you a funny feeling; you couldn't help but think of the people being hurt down there.

But we were in no position to be sentimental about it. Unfortunately, it was German and Italian lives or ours.

It was a happy day when after three months of Libya, we received orders to return to England. We took off from Tobruk at midnight.

From England we bombed targets in Germany and began 3 months' preparations for the raid on the Roumanian oil fields at Ploesti.

(over)



Red tracers from the small ground guns had been zig-zagging all around us for half a mile or more, and the guns themselves were sending up terrific barrages. Just as we hit the target, gas tanks started exploding.

One 10,000-gallon tank blew up right in front of us, shooting pillars of flaming gas 500 feet in the air. It was like a nightmare to see the blazing tank high above us. The pilot had to swerve sharply to the right to avoid what was really a cloud of fire. We felt as though we were flying through a furnace.

Light flak must have hit the gas of the plane to the right of us, for all of a sudden it was burning from end to end. It sank right down, as though no power on earth could hold it in the air for even a second, hit the ground and exploded.

### Usually You Don't See the Crash

Every man on that ship was a friend of mine, and I knew the position each was flying. I'd seen planes go down before, but always from a high altitude, and then you don't see the crash. This way it seemed I could reach out and touch those men.

Then we saw flak hit our group commander's plane. In a second it was burning from the bomb-bays back. He pulled it up as high as he could get it; it was fantastic to see that blazing Liberator climbing straight up. As soon as he started climbing, one man jumped out, and when he could get it no higher, two more came out. Every one of us knew he had pulled it up in order to give those men a chance. Then, knowing he was done for, he deliberately dove it into the highest building in Ploesti. The instant he hit, his ship exploded.

We left Ploesti a ruin. Huge clouds of smoke and fire billowed from the ground as we pulled away from the target.

We got back to camp 13 hours after we had taken off. It was the longest bombing mission ever flown, and that explains why it was necessary to do it at low altitude. If we had bombed at the usual level, we would never have had enough gas to get back.

It was also the most dangerous mission in the history of heavy bombardment, ranking as a battle in itself. It is officially regarded not as the Ploesti raid but as 'the battle of Ploesti.'

### Extra Five Missions

For a long time I had been thinking about volunteering for an extra five missions. I wanted to do that for my kid brother; he wasn't overseas then. The day after my 25th, I asked my commanding officer if I could go on five more. He said I should go home; in fact, there were order out already for me to do so, and a plane ticket to the States waiting for me.

It took me three months to get those five missions in, the weather was so bad. And then when I came home it was by banana boat and not airplane. I was sure burned up about that.

From the beginning I have felt my combat career would not be over until I had fought in the South Pacific, and so I asked to come home for a brief rest and then be assigned to a Liberator group in the South Pacific.

(over)



I certainly don't purpose to defend Japan. When I visit Tokyo it will be in a Liberator bomber. But I do believe that loyal Americans of Japanese descent are entitled to the democratic rights which Jefferson propounded, Washington fought for and Lincoln died for.

In my own case, I have almost won the battle against intolerance; I have many close friends in the Army now--my best friends, as I am theirs--where two years ago I had none. But I have by no means completely won that battle. Especially now, after the widespread publicity given the recent atrocity stories, I find prejudice once again directed against me, and neither my uniform nor the medals which are visable proof of what I have been through, have been able to stop it.

I can only reply: 'Although some individuals may discriminate against me, I shall never become bitter or lose faith, for I know such persons are not representative of the majority of the American people.'





The barometer of tolerance toward the evacuees is still too low on this Coast, and the opposition is still vehement and unscrupulous. We need to expedite the program of the United States Government, and to create an acceptance by the California public of the enlightened American way of dealing with law-abiding persons even though they are members of an unpopular minority.

In your lifetime and mine, Western civilization has twice drifted into a major catastrophe, due to lack of wisdom and understanding on the part of men. We shall do so again, and we shall lose the values for which we fight, unless we understand the implication of those values for the kind of complex world in which we live today. Basically, what men are seeking the world over is a decent security, an opportunity for a larger share of the good things of the earth, and above all a sense of meaning and dignity in their own lives. The only answer that can be given to these deep, perpetual hungers of men lies in the American concept of democracy, in the ideal of the common humanity of all men. Let us fight to preserve that concept no less vigorously than we fight to destroy the Germans and the Japs in Europe and the Pacific.



### Current National Attitudes

as recognized in the platforms of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions.

"We unreservedly condemn the injection into American life of appeals to racial and religious prejudice."

—Republican Equality Plank adopted in Chicago on July 19, 1944.

"We believe that racial and religious minorities have the right to live, develop and vote equally with all citizens and share the rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution. Congress should exert its full constitutional powers to support those rights."

—Democratic Equality plank adopted in Chicago on July 26, 1944.

*"The test of a free country . . .*



**Dr. Robert Gordon Sproul**

President of the  
University of California



A talk given by Dr. Robert G. Sproul, President of the University of California, at the California Club in Los Angeles, California on June 29, 1944, at a luncheon meeting of a group interested in the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play.

Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play

2234 TELEGRAPH AVENUE  
BERKELEY 4, CALIFORNIA



*... is the security it gives its minorities"*

The Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, of which I am Honorary Chairman, came into existence at a critical moment in American history, and to afford a means for the expression of views of all but unspeakable importance. It did not come into existence to protect, much less to coddle or glorify, the Japanese, but to champion and help to safeguard American democracy. It is not an organization of starry-eyed Utopians, of intemperate lovers of strange peoples, but of hard headed believers in the virtues of the American form of government as expressed by the Founding Fathers in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Its leadership in such persons as Dr. Millikan, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, and myself may be drawn from the lunatic fringe of American life, but it is not a leadership unacquainted with responsibility or unaware of the score. . . .

In spite of storms of abuse from certain quarters, the Committee has been most successful. Up and down the Pacific Coast, it has attracted a very considerable part of those who are universally respected as leaders in their communities to participate in its activities and to speak out for its cause. On the larger stage of the Nation, its influence has been even more notable, continuous and effective. In the face of honest hysteria and dishonest demagoguery, it has affected the policies of our government both in the legislative and executive branches. With the judicial branch its cause is secure because, to put it simply, it is just. . . .

#### AN EVIL PRECEDENT

FIRST AND FOREMOST, above everything else and for all of the time, the concern of the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play is for the integrity of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States. It believes with fervor, with

fanaticism if you will, that whenever and wherever the constitutional guarantees are violated in the treatment of a minority, no matter how unpopular or helpless, the whole fabric of American government is weakened, its whole effectiveness impaired. Each such violation establishes an evil precedent which is inevitably turned against another minority later, and eventually against the very principle on which our Nation is founded, namely, the dignity and worth of the human individual.

Even on this fundamental tenet of its faith, however, the position of the Committee is not doctrinaire or academic. It has recognized from the beginning, and under considerable heckling from its own more intemperate members, that the exigencies of war demand some sacrifice of the ordinary rights of all citizens, often considerable sacrifice, and that concerning certain groups of citizens under certain dangerous conditions extraordinary caution and special treatment are necessary and defensible if not desirable. But the Committee believes firmly that the guarantees of the Bill of Rights should be yielded only in extremity, only by deliberate and conscious act, and only in the cases of dangerous or subversive individuals or groups. All others should have its protection until there is proven need for martial law. As Acton, the great historian of human freedom has said, "The test of a free country is the security it gives to minorities."

#### SUPPORTED MILITARY

THE SECOND rock upon which the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play establishes its firm foundation, is the assumption, documented by the experience of man over the centuries, that in time of war, the military organization of a nation, in this country the War Department, deserves ungrudging, unstinted, unflinching support in all matters of military concern. The Committee has followed that policy unswervingly ever since it was established, and has found it sound, although it has always reserved the liberty to question any Government action.





For example, when the Army decided that evacuation of the Japanese from the Pacific Coast was required by military necessity, the Committee dropped immediately the important questions it had been raising, and properly raising, as to whether such treatment of American citizens or even loyal aliens squared with American ideals. But the Committee continues to combat the idea, now being advanced, that evacuation is proof of disloyalty. Moreover, the Committee contends that, since the Army ordered the evacuation, on grounds of military necessity, the Army should likewise decide when the process is to be reversed, and the evacuees allowed to recover gradually their civil rights. When the Army decides that the time has come to take this step, and issues a proclamation as clear as the original orders for the evacuation, the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play will once again cooperate to the limit with the military authorities and the War Department. And it believes that every patriot who prizes his own civil liberties should do the same.

#### DISPERSED RELOCATION

THERE ARE a number of minor facets of Committee policy, of course, but none which runs counter to the two major principles which I have discussed here today. Of these minor policies, I shall refer only to one, and that one only because it is a fertile source of misrepresentation as to the Committee's attitude. The Committee does not believe that all Japanese who have been evacuated from California should be returned to their homes. On the contrary, it favors the policy of dispersed relocation, which is the policy of the War Relocation Authority. It holds with all sensible Californians that the swarming of persons of one race in a Ghetto or a Little Mexico or Little Tokio, the separation of a minority physically and culturally from the rest of the population is a profound social and political error and a potent breeder of social and political ills. Moreover, it is convinced that there will never be a mass return of evacuees to the West Coast. Half of them, approximately, have already

been located elsewhere, or are likely to be by the end of 1944. In many instances, there is nothing for the others to return to here. Among the Nisei, there is a strong and understandable current of feeling against this area, and many of them have no intention of coming back if they can avoid it. But the right of loyal Japanese to come back if they so elect, cannot be denied without a denial of all that America has hitherto meant to racial and religious minorities, of all that has symbolized for the hopes of humanity. The dream of America will be over when the color of men's skins or other physical characteristics determines the communities in which they may live.

On this most significant issue the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play stands four square, with the President of the United States in his official statement of federal policy on relocation:

"With the segregation of the disloyal evacuees in a separate center, the War Relocation Authority proposes now to redouble its efforts to accomplish the relocation into normal homes and jobs in communities throughout the United States, but outside the evacuated area, of those Americans of Japanese ancestry whose loyalty to this country has remained unshaken through the hardships of the evacuation which military necessity made unavoidable.

#### RIGHT TO RETURN

"WE SHALL restore to the loyal evacuees the right to return to the evacuated area as soon as the military situation will make such restoration feasible. Americans of Japanese Ancestry, like those of many other ancestries, have shown that they can, and want to, accept our institutions and work loyally with the rest of us, making their own valuable contribution to the national wealth and well-being. In vindication of the very ideals for which we are





fighting this war it is important to us to maintain a high standard of fair, considerate, and equal treatment for the people of this minority, as of all other minorities."

This statement, we believe, is to be construed as a solemn pledge spoken by the President in the name of the American people.

## CLEAR THINKING

SO MUCH for the policies of the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, and now for a word or two on how it sets about to implement those policies. The sole weapon of the Committee is the truth, and the Light of Truth it tries to keep shining before our people, and especially those who determine the acts of our government, brightly and continuously. It seeks to promote cool, clear thinking, especially by the West Coast public, in spite of the distortions of fact and excesses of passion and prejudice which are inevitable in wartime. It helps the public to draw a line sharply between our enemies in Japan, the military criminals for whom no fate is too harsh, no punishment too cruel, and persons of Japanese extraction in the United States, two-thirds of whom are free from any blemish of disloyalty, even under the stress of most discriminatory treatment.

The Committee meets *sweeping generalizations* and *wholly unsupported* charges with documented facts. For example it confronts those who say that the only good Jap is a dead Jap with the extraordinary combat record of the 100th Battalion in Italy, a battalion composed entirely of Nisei privates, with half its officers Nisei, and all of them volunteers. That battalion came out of Salerno and Cassino with three Distinguished Service Crosses, 21 Bronze Stars, 36 Silver Stars, and 900 Purple Hearts—900 out of 1400 wounded in action. Again, for example, it answers the threat that returned white service men would murder persons of Japanese stock if they remained in the United States, by publishing scores of letters from men in the fighting forces, saying, in the words of one of them "Have no

fear that returning soldiers would desire to slit the throats of loyal Japanese at home. . . . We'll do our fighting on the battlefields against our country's enemies, and not on the streets at home against our country's friends."

Finally, the Committee backs every group and every individual that speaks out for sound Americanism and against the evil doctrine that justice and power are synonymous. It supports Seth Millington, Past Grand President of the Native Sons of the Golden West, and former State Commander of the American Legion, when he says to the Commonwealth Club, "I would have all known disloyal Japs sent to the land of the rising sun . . . by the first ship leaving San Francisco. Those who have volunteered for our armed forces I would keep here as part of our population." And the Committee is sympathetic with Mr. Millington's dilemma (but probably not with his solution of it) when he says further, "As to those that cannot be classified as either loyal or disloyal there is a most difficult problem. Under the law they are citizens and have rights."

The Committee endorses even more heartily these statesman-like sentences of Commander Wm. P. Houghton, of the American Legion, Department of California:

## SALUTE NISEI

"NUMEROUS PERSONS of Japanese ancestry are now serving with the armed forces of our country on the battle fronts, and, according to all reports, are serving valiantly and well. We salute all men and women who love this country enough to fight and, if needs be, die for it. Every person good enough to fight for us is entitled to our respect and equal protection under the Constitution." These words are a stinging rebuke to those patrioteers who, Nazi-like, would have us substitute a caste system based on race and color for the democratic principles of human worth and equality under the law. We cannot interpret them, or the word of Mr. Millington, as justifying the exclusion of loyal Japanese from California. . . .



## INDEX -- Ruth Kingman

- agriculture interests 44
- Air Force, U.S. 49, 51
- American Civil Liberties Union 32
- American Council on Race Relations 68
- American Federation of Labor 25
- American Legion 25, 36, 58
- American Trust Company 25
- Anderson, Leila 16
- Anglo-California National Bank 25
- Army, U.S. 8-11, 13, 26, 29-30, 32a, 33-40, 50-51, 54, 60, 64, 67, 71, 74
  - 442nd Regimental Combat Team 35-39, 52, 54
- Attorney General, U.S. 29
  
- Baldwin, Roger 32, 52
- Bancroft Library 31, 32a
- "Ban the Jap" group 57
- Barrows, David Prescott 24
- Bellquist, Mrs. Eric 7, 18
- Biddle, Francis 29, 34
- Black, Benjamin 25
- Black Dragon Societies 15
- Block, Karl Morgan 25
- Boettiger, Anna Roosevelt 62
- Breed, Eleanor 18
  
- California Club 54
- California College of Arts and Crafts 13
- California Joint Immigration Committee 24, 33, 56
- California State Chamber of Commerce 25
- California, State of
  - Agriculture, Department of 68
  - Education, Department of 68
  - Industrial Relations, Department of 25
  - War Board 68
  - Youth Authority 55
- Chinese Christian Church 5
- Christian Century 30
- Clarvoe, Frank 57
- College of the Pacific (now University of the Pacific) 3, 25
- Commonwealth Club of San Francisco 49-51, 64
- Coster, Frederick 25
- Cozzens, Robert 70
- Curren, John S. 25



Daily Californian 55

Davis, Jane 64-65

Davis, William 64

Dennis, Charles 17

De Roos, Robert 30

Deutsch, Monroe E. 25, 49-50

De Witt, General John 32a

Eastman School of Music 22

Edwards, Paul 57

Fair Employment, President's Committee on 68

Fair Play Committee (see Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play)

Farm Security Board, U.S. 68

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 27, 29, 53

Federal Housing Administration 61, 68

Federal Security Agency 68

Feng, Yü-hsiang 5

First Congregational Church of Berkeley 9-10

Fisher, Galen 24, 26, 31

Fisher, Ralph T. 25

fishing industry 60

Fisk, James K. 25

Fresno Bee 56

Fresno State College 11

Gaines, Frank 25

Grodzins, Morton 69

Hagar, Gerald 25

Hansen, Howard 22

Hearst newspapers 24, 55, 57

Herrick Memorial Hospital 10, 72

Hollywood Citizen (now Citizen News) 30

Hoover, J. Edgar 29

housing 61, 64

Ickes, Harold L. 61

Ino, Ed 22

Interior Department, U.S. 33, 61

Itano, Harvey 14-16

Japanese-American Citizens League 23, 37, 52, 66, 68

Japanese Baptist Church 7

Jefferds, Mary 31

Johns Hopkins University 15

Justice Department, U.S. 14, 26, 33, 74

Internment centers 14-15





Kaiser, Henry 51  
 Kaplan, Joseph 53  
 Kaplan, Katharine 53  
 Key System Railways 25  
 Kingman, Harry 3-4, 16  
 Kuroki, Ben 49-53, 64-65

Lange, Dorothea 70  
 League of Women Voters 30  
 lobbying 28-30, 34  
 Loper, Reverend Vere 10  
Los Angeles Times 46, 57  
 Lundberg, Alfred J. 25, 32a

McClatchey, Eleanor 56-57  
 McClatchey newspapers 24, 51, 56  
 McCloy, John 29, 34-35, 37-38, 43, 54  
 McCombs, Philip 31  
 McGiffert, Arthur C. 25  
 Manaka, Mr. and Mrs. Frank 59-60  
 Manzanar relocation center 38  
 Marshall, George C. 5  
 Masaoka, Mike 38  
 Meiklejohn, Alexander 34  
 Mills College 25  
Modesto Bee 56  
 Mormon Church 66  
 Myer, Dillon 27, 29, 34, 37, 44, 46-47, 54, 61, 70

NAACP 68  
 Native Sons of the Golden West 24, 33, 56, 58  
 Navy, U.S. 27  
 Neustadt, Richard 10  
New Republic 30  
 newspapers 24, 29-30, 55

Oakland Tribune 55  
 Obata, Gyo 23  
 Obata, Kim 23, 72  
 Okamatsu, Bob 7  
 Olson, Culbert 24

Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play 24, passim  
 Pacific Manufacturing Corp. 25  
 Pacific School of Religion 25  
 pacifism 27  
 Poston relocation center 60  
 public relations, political 29-30, 41-43, 46, 49-52, 54, 59, 67, 71-73



racial attitudes 2, 24, 26, 33, 36, 38, 43, 49-52, 54, 57-58, 60, 68,  
70, 74

radio 29

Reinhardt, Aurelia 25

Roosevelt, Eleanor 62-63

Roosevelt, Franklin D. 62-63

Rowell, Chester 31, 32a, 55-56

Sacramento Bee 56

St. John's College 34

San Francisco Chronicle 30, 55

San Francisco News 57

Sherman, Lillie Margaret 8

Shidler, Atlee E. 32

Sproul, Robert Gordon 14, 25, 32a, 44-48, 53

Stanford University 25, 57

Stiles Hall (University YMCA) 3-4, 8, 64, 72

Stilwell, Joseph 37

Suzuki, Goro (Jack Soo) 18

Takahashi, Barbara 72

Tanforan assembly center 9, 12-13

Taylor, Paul 70

Tennant, Terrell 52

Thomas, Dorothy 69

Thomas, Norman 52

Thompson, Joseph 25

Time magazine 30

Tolan Committee (House Committee on Interstate Migration) 8, 27

Topaz relocation center 17-23

Tule Lake relocation center 41, 46, 72

United States Employment Service (formerly California State Employment Service) 9

University of California 3, 14, 24-25, 44, 69

Wada, Yori 55

Walker, Margery 10

War Department, U.S. (now Defense Department) (see Army, U.S.)

War Manpower Commission 68

War Relocation Authority (WRA) 16, 28-29, 41-43, 45-48, 54, 60-61, 68,  
74

Warren, Earl 32a-33, 67-68

Wilbur, Ray Lyman 25, 47

"Yellow Peril" 55-56

YMCA 3, 7, 16, 68

Young, C. C. 25

YWCA 8, 11, 16, 68









LILA ANDREWS WILSON

An Interview Conducted by  
Joe Wilson

February 1968

Mrs. Raymond Wilson (nee Lila Juliet Andrews)

Born July 2, 1888 in Battle Lake, Minnesota.

Presently resides in Parma (Canyon County),  
Idaho.

Interviewed ~~on~~ February 1968 by her son, Joe  
Wilson, at his home in Mill Valley, California.

The following manuscript is open for research purposes and  
may be quoted without permission.



LILA ANDREWS WILSON

Joe Wilson

I think you may have a new angle on Relocation Camps -- not as a survivor but as a spectator. What year did you visit the Idaho camp, and how did you happen to go?

Lila Wilson

I was on the national board of directors of the YWCA at the time, living in Idaho, and the headquarters in New York asked me to look into the relocation of West Coast Japanese Americans in my state. It must have been in the spring of 1943.

It was surprising how few people in Boise Valley knew that huge camp was there.

Joe W.

Where exactly was it located?

Lila W.

It was out in the Min<sup>i</sup>adoka Desert, just a few miles south of the Craters of the Moon. It covered about 68,000 acres.

Joe W.

Did you actually live with the Japanese?

Lila W.

I asked to, but I was told the quarters were too crowded -- and I later found out this was true. ~~But~~ I did have my meals with them. I was "assigned" to an interned family as a guest. I slept in one of the recreation halls. The camp administrator



and his wife invited me to stay with them, but I didn't think I'd learn much that way. It wasn't until later that I found out no provision was made for guests of the Japanese. If they had visitors, it just meant a little less food for those who lived there. It was rationed very closely.

Joe W.

How was the food generally?

Lila W.

~~Skimpy~~ Skimpy! I still remember my first meal: A bowl of thin vegetable soup and a lettuce leaf holding two sections of canned grapefruit. There was always plenty of bread. This is cheap to make, and it's filling.

Everyone ate in the area dining halls; no food could be taken to the living quarters. We sat on benches at long tables of bare boards and ate from tin plates with army utensils.

Sometimes we had a fish chowder, sometimes beef stew with faint traces of meat. At night we were served about three ounces of fat pork or an organ meat, plus a boiled vegetable of some kind and a small bowl of rice. Breakfast consisted of hot cereal, about a cupful. The children had milk, reconstituted from ~~powder~~ powder. At every meal we had all the bread we could eat.

Everyone lived for Sunday dinner. Then they were served chicken or turkey -- with lots of bread dressing, of course. The meal was the highlight of the week.

Joe W.

Do you remember the name of the family you were assigned to?





Lila W.

No, I don't, and I never did see them or hear from them again.

He had been a dentist in Seattle. She was a school teacher, and they had two children, two girls.

Joe W.

How long were you there?

Lila W.

Just a week. I may have gone at the worst time of the year. Winter was breaking up. The snow had melted, and the lava dust had turned to mud. There wasn't a sign of a sidewalk, not even a plank to walk on. Everyone just sloshed through the mud. The children came running into the dining halls from the outside, tracking mud over everything. But you can bet it was cleaned up before the next meal. All the camp maintenance was done by the internees -- the cleaning, food preparation, and so on. The place was immaculate.

Joe W.

What were the living quarters like?

Lila W.

Everything was in ~~the~~ Army barracks -- the dining halls, the recreation halls, the sanitary facilities and laundries, and the living quarters. Ugly barracks buildings covered with tarpaper. In the living quarters, tiny cubicles were partitioned off for each family. ~~Four~~ <sup>(allotted to "my" family.)</sup> Four cots filled most of the space. The husband had built a table, probably three feet square, from a discarded packing crate. There were no chairs.



There was no plumbing in the living quarters; sanitary facilities were in a separate building. Drinking water was in a bucket on the table.

A single bare light globe hung from the center of the ceiling. There were two windows in one wall, and a door with a small pane of glass.

You could hear the families next door through the thin partitions. There was no privacy.

There was even less privacy in the buildings used for toilets and showers. The toilets were in a long row against the wall, placed so close together they were almost touching. Opposite them was a row of tubs, as crowded as the toilets. There were no partitions.

Joe W.

The men and women used separate buildings, didn't they?

Lila W.

Oh yes. Well, I don't know whether it was a separate building. I believe the building was divided in half. One end was for men and the other for women.

Joe W.

How long had this family been in the camp?

Lila W.

If I remember correctly, they had been shipped from Seattle in April 1942. They stayed several months in a county fairgrounds -- I believe it was in Wenatchee or Yakima -- while their Relocation Center was being put up.



Joe W.

You say he was a dentist. What did he do with his practice and his equipment?

Lila W.

There was nothing they could do with anything. He just locked the door of his office and walked off.

Most of the Japanese <sup>who were</sup> relocated from the west coast lost everything. You know that the ones with large orchards here in California came back at the end of the war to nothing -- no home, no land, no car, no job. These people had been lucky enough to rent their house <sup>in Seattle</sup> to some Caucasian friends. With so many houses on the market at one time, prices dropped to nothing. The same with cars. They had left their cars with the house, and the friends had promised to try to sell them.

Joe W.

How were they treated by the people in Seattle after war against Japan was declared?

Lila W.

I wasn't told very much. She did say that her school students had been courteous to her. I don't know what grade she taught. Some of her husband's white patients cancelled their appointments. Others didn't pay their bills. This was serious, because their bank accounts were frozen and they couldn't draw out any money.

The FBI started picking up the older men, men who had been born in Japan. This woman and her husband had both been born in Washington and both were graduates of the University





of Washington. One time when I said to her, "I really feel ashamed of my country," she said, "But it's my country, too!"

Joe W.

Were they taken out of Seattle by train?

Lila W.

No, they went in Army trucks, with just what they could carry in one suitcase. When the Idaho camp was finished, they did ~~go there~~ by train. It was in August or September, and the windows had to be kept closed. It was stifling. Some of the cars ran out of water. They thought they had been uncomfortable in their ~~box~~ horse stall in the fairgrounds, but they wished they were back. At least they had had cool water and green grass. Then when they saw how barren the Idaho desert was, they were just sick. Most of them had never lived anyplace but along the coast. The contrast was very depressing.

Joe W.

How many internees did the camp hold?

Lila W.

I was told by the camp administrator that it was built to hold 10,000. I don't know whether there were that many there when I was there.

Joe W.

Was there any way to heat those barracks?

Lila W.

My family had a pot-bellied stove in one corner of their room. The first day I was there it had a low fire going in it, smoking badly and not throwing off much heat. I had the feeling the



fire had been ~~built~~ built in my honor. Coal was rationed as closely as food.

During the day, most of the women went to the rec halls. Any books or magazines that came into the camp were left in the halls for everyone to share. And they had some organized activity -- adult classes in art and flower arranging, and so on. ~~They~~ They had no materials, aside from what they could pick up inside the barbed wire fence, but you'd be surprised what they could come up with. One woman showed me a bonsai of sagebrush that she was doing. The tree was a piece of old Idaho sage. At the base was an arrangement of small pebbles. Their dull gold made a delicate contrast with the grey-green of the sagebrush. The whole thing had been assembled in the lid of an empty can, and it was exquisite.

There were other objects equally lovely, all created from the desert -- made of things we wouldn't bother to pick up, and probably wouldn't even see.

Joe W.

What did the men do during the day?

Lila W.

Most of them had work to do around the camp. Those with no regular jobs picked up litter.

The dentist worked in the hospital. The hospital was large and well-equipped. There wasn't any home care, no way to take food to the sick, so they went to the hospital. Most of the nurses and aides were Japanese, both men and women.



The camp administrator told me he was negotiating with owners of large farms in that part of the state to hire male internees for topping sugar beets, thinning and picking spuds, and other stoop labor. I understand that this was done and that the men were able to bring food back into the camp to their families.

Do you know what? The Japanese Red Cross sent food parcels to those camps! Mostly green tea and rice cakes, but were they ever welcome. One day while I was there we had a tea party in the rec hall. The recreation halls were heated and were really quite comfortable, although at night I slept in most of my clothing and wrapped the rest of it around the blankets. I can imagine that most of them slept cold through the winters.

Joe W.

How did you find the morale of the camp?

Lila W.

The only word of complaint I heard during the whole week was about the dust. The desert wind carried the <sup>black</sup> lava dust from the Craters and deposited it over everything. Whatever you picked up -- food, a shoe, a magazine -- felt gritty. This bothered the women more than anything.

The men wanted only one thing -- and that was to be allowed to go and fight for the United States. It struck me as a sad contradiction that a man would want to risk his life for a country that kept his family in a concentration camp.





Joe W.

How did they seem to feel about your being in camp in the role of observer?

Lila W.

They couldn't have been more gracious. I think they sensed my warm feelings toward them and recognized my sincerity. After all, I was an old woman even then; I had lived through a lot by the time World War II came around. I was 12 years old at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. We children were told that all Chinese were devils with horns and tails. During the First World War we were told that the Germans were a race of fiends. I couldn't buy that! I had been raised by German grandparents ~~who~~ who were cultured and gentle. By the time of World War II I had lived too long to believe that citizens of Japanese ancestry were going to murder me in my bed.

I'm sure I got more out of the visit than they did. It really influenced my life ~~to see~~ to see how those people kept faith in ~~the~~<sup>their</sup> country when they were being treated so badly. And of course, looking back on it, it seems as though it couldn't possibly have happened. The Japanese families in Idaho today are among our most loved and admired friends.

Everything changes; everything passes. If I've learned anything at all in my 80 years, it's this.







Miriam Feingold

Graduated from Swarthmore College in 1963 with a B.A. degree, and from the University of Wisconsin in 1966 with an M.A. degree in American history. Completing requirements for a Ph.D. in American history from the University of Wisconsin. Graduate studies also include criminology.

Worked in field services and oral history for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1966-1967.

Taught American history at San Jose City College, 1970.

Joined the staff of the Regional Oral History Office in December, 1969 as an interviewer for the Earl Warren Project specializing in law enforcement and corrections, and local political history.





Amelia R. Fry

Graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1947 with a B.A. in psychology, wrote for campus magazine; Master of Arts in educational psychology from the University of Illinois in 1952, with heavy minors in English for both degrees.

Taught freshman English at the University of Illinois 1947-48, and Hiram College (Ohio) 1954-55. Also taught English as a foreign language in Chicago 1950-53.

Writes feature articles for various newspapers, was reporter for a suburban daily 1966-67. Writes professional articles for journals and historical magazines.

Joined the staff of Regional Oral History Office in February, 1959.

Conducted interview series on University history, woman suffrage, the history of conservation and forestry, and public administration and politics.

Director, Earl Warren Oral History Project

Secretary, Oral History Association; oral history editor, Journal of Library History, Philosophy, and Comparative Librarianship.



**Rosemary Levenson**

Grew up in England; B.A. in History from Cambridge University, 1948. Graduate work in History and International Law at Cambridge and Radcliffe. M.A. in Sociology at the University of California Berkeley in 1969.

Moved to Berkeley in 1951 and worked as free-lance editor and anthropological photographer. Volunteer service in groups related to the public schools, religion, and University of California faculty wives.

Travel in Europe and the Far East. Joined the staff of the Regional Oral History Office in 1970.

























